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THE
BAPTIST PREACHER.

ORIGINAL—MONTHLY.

REV. HENRY KEELING,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW SERIES—1850.

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THE BAPTIST PREACHER.

New Series.

January, 1850.

No. 1.

EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

In accordance with a practice well nigh universal, we present our patrons and readers this, our ninth New Year's Address. We sincerely congratulate them and ourselves, that Divine Providence permits us to enter upon the duties of another year. We intend, however, no mere passing compliment, but mean what we say. That for which we offer congratulation, involves grave responsibilities, of which we cannot be, nor can our patrons and readers be, insensible. It is a matter of grave import to live. The mere misapplication of talents is unfortunate if not bad; to suffer them to remain unemployed, is a perversion of Divine goodness; and to abuse them is still worse. No man, who can work, has a right even to remain idle. Especially does it behoove every man in this age, and in this country, to see and know what he does. But that we may confine our present remarks to the subject which now more immediately concerns us, although in connection with the present season, we must descend to several particulars, upon each of which, we shall be brief.

1. Our past history.

Eight years ago, we issued the first number of this Work, under the title, "The Virginia Baptist Preacher." At that time there was but one publication of the kind in all the land, and that was "The National Preacher," edited in New York. Ours was an experiment, anticipating at first a limited circulation of sermons, by Baptist ministers alone, either residents of Virginia, or those who had emigrated hence to other States. At the end of four years, at the suggestion of friends South and North, East and West, and with a view to enlarged circulation, possibly embracing the whole Baptist family in our vast country, we changed our name to "The Baptist Preacher," and sought a co-operation commensurate with the title. Experience soon convinced us of the impracticability of this, except by a removal to New York or Philadelphia. A great city is to such a scheme, what the heart is to the body.

But had it been otherwise, the disruption which at about that time occurred between the North and South, not only among Baptists, but other denominations, must have proved fatal to our project. Previously, few Southern papers could boast of Northern subscribers. It was much more common that Northern papers enjoyed Southern circulation. One obvious reason for this difference was, that few persons emigrate from South to North, while many do from North to South. And what is more natural, than that we highly esteem that which comes from home? We have actually known Northern ministers residing in the South to do more for the papers of their native, than their adopted, homes. In the mean time, works of similar description, among other denominations as well as our own, and on all sides of us, have been springing into existence, with what success, we are without the means of knowing.

Suffice it to say, that any enterprise of this kind in the South, must look to the South alone for the field of its labor and of its reward. But even this disadvantage has its offset. Generally, the smaller the plantation, the better is, or ought to be, the cultivation of the soil. A single State, thoroughly canvassed, will do more than the whole slightly passed over.

2. Our field of labor.

It was with us, for a long time, a cherished idea, that the "Preacher" might be one of the links by which the North and the South might be held together, and enjoy at least religious communion. Nor is this idea, even now, utterly abandoned. We still have respected Northern names on our list, and hope to retain, and even to increase them. But we never have been able to enlist any strong feeling in our favor from any point north of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The fact is, that to this hour, there is more of kindly feeling in the South for the North, than there is in the North for the South. True, we feel that we have been wronged, and that we now are wronged, but we have made allowances, and do make allowances, for the prejudices of men. The mass of the people at the North do not know the facts of the case of which they dispute so warmly; nor are they acquainted with the arguments based upon those facts. And the same is true of our own people. Indeed, the more enlightened among us, and those who had studied the subject of discussion most, have but imperfectly understood it. Stringfellow's letter first awakened our own mind to the conviction, that Dr. Fuller himself had made concessions to Dr. Wayland, and concessions material to the argument, which ought not to be made. In other words, the premises upon which Dr. Wayland's whole argument rests, are themselves false. But leaving all this to rest where it belongs, two

things are settled and fixed. The first is, that as Southerners and as citizens, free, civilly and religiously, we will not be dictated to by any power or authority but that of God. The other is, that while we do not anathematize as they do us, others whose views on a subject not vital to religion differ from our own, we cannot maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with men who denounce us. In our view of the matter, proslavery or anti-slavery, has no more to do with christianity than has the questions, bank or anti-bank, tariff or anti-tariff. The church of Christ was instituted by Him for certain purposes specified in the law itself, and no human organization has the right to impose any extraneous restrictions whatever, whether as matters of legislation, or conditions of membership. If, in the primitive churches, the slave and his master communed at the same table, by what law can our Northern brethren exclude us both?

3. Our relation to the community.

By the community we mean all who are not Baptists. In spite of all we can do or say to the contrary, this publication, as well as every thing else that appertains to us denominationally, suffers detriment by the very use of the epithet, "Baptist." And yet it is impossible for us to avoid it. This is a disadvantage under which we must continue to labor. We beg attention to it now, for two reasons. First, we wish others who love Christ, but do not go with us, to consider whether they are not doing us injustice, when they consider themselves less sectarian than ourselves, merely because we are obliged to be distinguished from them all. And secondly, that Baptists may not forget the solemn obligations which their isolated position creates.

The fact is, there are but two denominations of christians in all christendom: Baptists and Pedo-baptists. The latter include all who admit to baptism or any substitute for it, infants, or minors who cannot, or do not, profess faith in Christ. It follows that all the sects are sprouts of the Romish church, whose only antagonists are Baptists. In accordance with these views, if we could be any thing but Baptists, and were to become so, we should be Catholics. And it has always seemed strange to us, that any one except a Baptist should think of a controversy with a Catholic. The two strongest objections we have to papacy are in common to it, with all Pedo-baptists: the admission of the world into the church, while yet in infancy, thus confounding the world and the church; and the union of church and State, the latter being an inevitable result from the former.

In accordance with these views, notwithstanding our position as Baptists exposes us to the charge of bigotry from our Pedo-baptist brethren,

nevertheless, we are so latitudinarian as to aver, that if we belonged to any Pede-baptist sect whatever, a mere change of residence, or of domestic relations, or prospect of extended usefulness, might determine us to unite ourselves with another sect. We could be a Methodist in Richmond, a Presbyterian in Charleston, an Episcopalian in Philadelphia, and a Lutheran in Baltimore. Why not? Any christian who can commune with another may belong to the same church with him; and nothing can be more preposterous than for a church to admit to its table one whom it would reject or expel as a member, or for an individual to commune with a church of which he could not consistently be a member. Fellowship and communion are plainly correlative. Yet our Pede-baptist brethren, without distinction, denounce as refusing to commune with them, those whom they would not admit as members, or whom, if members, they would immediately expel, namely, all Baptists. We are not saying these things in accusation of our Pede-baptist brethren. We are simply calling the attention of our readers to facts, and facts which it behooves all men, especially Baptists, maturely to consider.

4. Our relation to other periodicals.

The religious periodical literature of the times, is one of the most remarkable facts of the times. Its results transcend all arithmetical calculations. But there is one feature common to it all. Every denomination, in the organs maintaining its own particular views, carefully excludes the rest, except for purposes of caricature or criticism. Who ever saw an honest statement of a Baptist peculiarity in a Pede-baptist paper? Hence, the great mass of Pede-baptists are profoundly ignorant of what the Baptists hold and teach. And their ignorance is generally in proportion to their cultivation and refinement in other respects. Paradoxical as this may seem, it is as true as revelation itself. What we see and know, we hold to be indisputable. From these premises, and others such, we infer that solemn responsibilities devolve upon Baptists, peculiar to themselves.

This subject, "Our relation to other periodicals," the relation of "The Baptist Preacher" to other periodical publications, presents two aspects.

As regards other publications circulated among Baptists, this work interferes with none of them—cannot be a substitute for any one of them—nor be substituted by any one of them. A miscellaneous magazine, or a weekly newspaper, could not supply the place of "The Preacher," much less could the Preacher supply the place of the weekly newspaper. All we wonder at is, that such a thought should ever enter the mind of any one. The magazine is a source of instruction and pleas-

ure. How any family could dispense with the weekly paper, we never have been able to divine. The Preacher stands upon its own merits, and occupies its own sphere.

As regards the religious periodical literature of the country in general, without reference to any particular class of publications, the "Preacher" proposes objects for which all of them combined, would be no substitute.

To what magazine or weekly newspaper can you refer, expecting to find such a production as Howell's sermon on Ordination? It alone, is worth the whole eight years' subscription of the Preacher from the commencement. And this is only one of a hundred, on all great and important truths of the gospel, preached by some of our most distinguished men in all the Southern and Western States.

The position occupied by Baptists, is in the highest possible sense enviable—but in others greatly unenviable. We stand single handed against the whole world, religious and irreligious. Not that the irreligious world do not respect us and admire many things that distinguish us. We know they do. But they do not appreciate religious truth as we do; nor can they comprehend the motives that actuate us. This is not to be expected. We must bear reproach. Nor do we expect to be comprehended by the mass of our brethren of other persuasions. Most men are without the time and opportunity for elaborate investigation. Our chief difficulty is with the clergy. It is their business to know. But we have two consolations. The first is, God and truth are on our side. The second is, the world and our brethren will do us justice at last. It is inevitable.

But in the mean time, we have an important and difficult part to act. To be faithful under such trying circumstances, is no easy task. These very remarks made in all good faith as they are, may subject us to the imputation of irrelevancy. But we know otherwise. We will explain by stating a case in point. There is a Baptist Tract and Publication Society; and there is another common to all the other evangelical sects. This latter is a noble institution. But it cautiously conceals truths for which Baptists would go to the stake; the concealment of these truths is one of its articles. Nay, more than this is true—it can publish no sentence to which any one of a committee of all the sects, makes objection. The Pedit-baptist must sacrifice a part of what he holds to be truth; but he need not violate his conscience. For ourselves, as a Baptist, we would prefer to be a Pedit-baptist, were it possible, rather than unite in such an organization. We should, then, at least be consistent. But to contend for an isolated church, in order to maintain

truths held sacred, and yet unnecessarily to unite with those from whom we dissent, for the very purpose of propagating their peculiarities and concealing our own, is an inconsistency of which we cannot be guilty while we retain our senses.

Hence our reasons for wishing a religious Baptist periodical, as well as permanent literature. If we, as Baptists, suffer commerce, agriculture, mechanics, politics, science, literature, fashion, taste, every thing not religious, and all the religious sects of the world besides, each to have its own periodical literature, while we are destitute or careless, are we faithful, are we honest?

5. Our relation to the ministry.

We have heard several persons say, "We do not like to read a sermon;" and others, "We can hear more than we have opportunity for, or can retain if heard." All such persons misapprehend the relation we sustain to the living ministry. We do not propose merely the transfer of a few sermons from the pulpit to the press; and still less the substitution even on a limited scale of the press for the pulpit. We wish to be auxiliary to the pulpit.

That such a work as this, well conducted, circulated, read and heeded, should not be a valuable auxiliary to the pulpit, is plainly impossible. It frequently happens that an elaborate sermon, on some absorbing topic, called for by the times, is preached. Its discussion is confined to particular audiences, or circulated only by means of the weekly papers or a pamphlet. This work is a vehicle for all such. Young preachers need good models upon which to form their taste. The sermons of this work ought to be such. In a word, men of abilities need some channel just such as this for conversing with churches beyond their respective charges—churches for the same reason wish to hear other and distant heralds of the cross—a widely extended interchange of thought and opinion is desirable; the Preacher is a medium for all this and much more. And we can see the fruits of our labors in all these respects on all sides around us.

6. Our relation to the churches.

Of course we do not mean in their ecclesiastic capacity—but the entire community of Baptists, individually and generally. One great object to be attained by some means, is the training of the minds of our members in the knowledge and defence of the great truths of the gospel. It is a fact not to be concealed, that many, most minds are confused by the multiplicity and contradictions of the doctrines they hear. Tens of thousands have no stated ministry. They hear all—and rely chiefly on a protracted effort once a year, for building up the cause in their midst.

Our first great desire is, to see every church with its devoted, enlightened, supported, pastor or bishop. Next, a Sunday school in every church. And then a sound religious permanent and periodical literature. To express our views of the importance of a weekly religious newspaper, we have no adequate words. Each State needs its own denominational paper. This, in the present condition of things, is vital to denominational prosperity and usefulness. We rejoice to see this impression becoming general.

In conclusion, we desire attention to two more particulars.

1. The strongest possible motives urge us to do all in our power to render this paper what it proposes to be, and what the public and the denomination expect. A trial of eight years convinces us that we can never again resume our ministerial functions. All the solicitude felt by a minister of the gospel that his pulpit ministrations may build up the Redeemer's kingdom, is felt also by us, that this periodical may make "full proof of its ministry." Does the pastor or the evangelist water by his prayers and tears, the word sown by him? So do we. Does he say in his heart, "Then we live, when ye stand fast in the Lord?" So say we. In a word, the publication and dissemination of the sermons of others, appears in the providence of God to be the vocation to which we are called. This is, therefore, to be added to the minor motive, that this is our business. It is our business both religious and secular.

2. The issue of the work involves many considerations, which must be left to the intelligence, punctuality, generosity, and forbearance of its patrons. During a part of the past year, personal and domestic affliction interfered, especially during the cholera panic, with the regular mailing of the numbers. It is hoped there will be no irregularity hereafter. The best means have been used to prevent it. To our old friends who, from the beginning, have taken an interest in the work, we renew our pledge to endeavor to make it worthy their continued support. And may we not hope to obtain many new friends, both agents and subscribers? The best method of sending us names and money is by mail, addressed to us at our risk. We prefer this to any other, even if we must pay the postage; a thing never necessary to be done, except through neglect, as the post office laws always provide for this object in some way or other, and we may expect another improvement of these laws during the present session of Congress. EDITOR.

P. S.—Since the foregoing was in type, another publication, similar in kind to this, has been added to the list of those already claiming the

attention of the public. It is the "Pulpit Reporter," edited in New York. Its prospectus number consists of 40,000 copies. Its aim is, of course, to be a national work. Its object is to publish the sermons of evangelical ministers of all sects, just as they are reported from the pulpit. It cannot, therefore, supply the place of "The Baptist Preacher," which is confessedly a denominational work. As we said on another page, while we do not propose to enter the arena of controversy, we do not conceal any part of what we believe to be the truth, and shall contend for our denominational peculiarities. As Baptists, we are obliged to do this by conscience itself; a candor and honesty, for which no liberal Pedo-baptist can blame us.

Moreover, Baptists will scarcely fail to perceive in the enterprise alluded to, an incentive and an encouragement to increased perseverance and fidelity. If Pedo-baptists leave no honorable measures unused to propagate what their ablest advocates admit, is without *command* or *precedent* in the New Testament, but must be proved *in some other way*, what shall we do with *both precedents and commands*?

But may not Pedo-baptists be as good as Baptists? Other things being equal, certainly not, unless disobedience is as good as obedience. If other things be unequal, the question is as impertinent as the question, may not a foreigner be as good as a citizen? As a man he may be, but as a citizen there can be no comparison, since he is no citizen at all. A lady as such may be superior to another, who is also a wife, but neither kind words, nor kind acts, nor an honest heart, dispenses with the matrimonial nuptials. Although a mere ceremony, they are essential to legitimacy. Neither taxes, nor military service, can constitute a citizen; it must be the oath of allegiance, a mere ceremony. Ed.

GOD LONG-SUFFERING, AND THE SINNER INSULTING:

A sermon, by REV. HENRY KEELING.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward. not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—2 Pet. iii: 9.

The great, distinguishing, attribute of man, has, by many, been supposed to be reason. But it is not. That which elevates us highest in the scale of existence, is the moral sense. It is that we may know truth from falsehood, and right from wrong; that we may pursue the good and shun the evil; that we may be religious; that we may be holy. Moral excellence is in its own nature the noblest excellence. It is that which constitutes the chief glory of Deity himself. It is not that he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and unchanging, that makes him God; it is that he is good. Of the moral attributes of our glorious Creator, three are exhibited in the text: his faithfulness; his patience; his benevolence. It is of two of these that we propose now briefly to discourse; and we select two, because the existence of one of them is mentioned as a reason for the exercise of the other: the long-suffering and the benevolence of God. We wish you to see, at one glance, what it is that we propose to show. God is patient; and this patience is extended—"He is long suffering to us-ward." This is a fact. The reason of it is, that he is benevolent: "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

1. God is patient; and this patience is extended even to long-suffering. The connection of our text advises us to discuss this proposition by several subordinate propositions, each of which claims your serious and candid attention.

First. It is of the very nature of sin, intentionally to misunderstand truth and duty; and

Secondly. When truth and duty are understood, it is of the very nature of sin to pervert and abuse them.

The coming of Christ in his kingdom and glory, was an important item, in his own ministry, and that of his apos-

cles. Of this you may see a striking specimen in the last verse of the first, and of the second, and of the third chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians. I should be glad if you would read them consecutively. The first reads: "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The second reads: "And what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" And the third reads: "To the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." It is not much to be wondered at, that when such prominence was given to this idea—and the thought was brought so vividly before them—the Thessalonians supposed the end of the world to be at hand. The apostle hastens in his second epistle to correct the misapprehension. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our being gathered together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." It is evident, in a word, to those who will carefully compare the various expressions, "The day of God"—"the coming of the day of God"—"and the coming of the Son of Man," that the connection in which they occur, will usually supply the meaning. That they sometimes designate the day of retribution—sometimes the overthrow of Jerusalem—and sometimes the display of Christ's power in establishing his kingdom, protecting his friends and prostrating his enemies, is evident and clear. As the author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm* has forcibly and beautifully expressed it, "To the christian church, the second coming of Christ, stands where his first coming stood to the Jewish—in the very centre of the field of prophetic light; and a participation of the glories then to be revealed, is limited to those who in every age are devoutly looking for him." It is essential to the nature of prophecy, that it should be in some respects dark, in others plain; dark until events reveal it, then incapable of being misunderstood, except intentionally. It mattered not, if Eve did suppose that the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," was fulfilled in the

birth of her first son. "I have gotten a man from the Lord;" facts soon undeceived her. But to our point. And let me here throw in another proposition essential to this discussion. It is,

Thirdly. That all interpretations of scripture, whose moral is bad, are false.

These men said, vauntingly said, and vainly thought they triumphantly said: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Listen to the apostle's refutation of their infidelity. In the first place he denies their assertion, that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Although for his mercy's sake he had long delayed it, God had once destroyed the world by water, and they knew it. In the second place, if it was true, that the threatened vengeance had been long delayed, they misconstrued the non-fulfillment of the divine threatening when they ascribed it to want of veracity or power. He is not slack concerning his promise. He is governed by another motive. And as he did destroy the anti-deluvian world by water, so he will the post-deluvian by fire.

It is not an easy thing to hold the truth in unrighteousness. False interpretations of scripture are usually connected with badness of moral conduct. The man who vauntingly asks, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and the man who "scoffs at religion," and the man who "walks after his own lusts," are usually the very same man.

Never was there a more obviously true remark, than that of the wise man: "Fools make a mock at sin." Sin is moral insanity. In these days of refinement, it would be rude to charge men with want of intelligence. Indeed, no good could result from such a reflection. But is it not strange that men should be less willing to be thought weak than bad. "O, we know we are sinners." This is nothing. But to be pronounced "weak," this is shocking. We make no such charge. Inspiration has decided that the man who "scoffs" at things sacred, is a fool. Sin occupies such a position in religion, that inadequate or unjust conceptions and moral feelings in relation to it, lead to inadequate or unjust conceptions and moral feelings respecting every thing in it.

“Who laughs at sin, laughs at his Maker’s frowns;
 Laughs at the sword of justice o’er his head;
 Laughs at the dear Redeemer’s tears and wounds;
 Who but for sin had never groaned and bled.”

Contempt for religion, scoffing, ridicule, and immorality, are intimate companions. “Scoffers,” “walking after their own lusts.”

Bishop Porteus fitly observes: “In making wit his principal instrument to vilify the gospel, Voltaire showed a thorough knowledge of the world. He knew that mankind generally prefer *wit* to *logic*; and love to be *entertained* rather than *convicted*; that it is easier to point an epigram than to produce an argument; that few men *reason* justly, but that all the world can laugh.”

We have said that sin is worse than moral weakness; that it is moral insanity. No, the Bible says so. What are among the most decided evidences any man can give that he is insane? What test would you consider the most decisive? Let me suppose a case. You are a merchant. You deal in ten articles of merchandise. In nine you have invested one hundred dollars each. In these, when you buy or sell, you manifest the utmost solicitude. You buy the best quality on the best terms; and you sell for the surest and highest pay, even to extortion. But whenever you deal in that other article in which you have invested a million, you are indifferent. You buy at the highest price—you sell at the lowest—you care not whether you are paid or not—you are utterly careless on this subject. Could you give a stronger instance of insanity? Scarcely, except by paying no regard to religion, and feeling deeply interested in every thing else. That is no highly colored picture of the poet,

“But what of their follies passed, surprised
 Them most, and seemed most totally insane,
 And unaccountable was value set
 On objects of a day, was serious grief,
 Or joy, for loss or gain, of mortal things.
 So utterly impossible it seemed
 When men, their proper interests saw, that aught
 Of terminable kind, that aught which e’er
 Could die, or cease to be, however nam’d
 Should make a human soul—a legal heir

Of everlasting years, rejoice or weep,
In earnest mood; for nothing now worth seem'd
A thought, but had eternal bearing in't.

I have been briefly considering the apostle as suggesting these positions—that it is of the nature of sin intentionally to misunderstand truth and duty; and when understood, to pervert and abuse them; and so to interpret the scriptures as to educe from them evil instead of good. In the close of the chapter he adduces other examples in those who “*wrested*” the “things hard to be understood” written by the apostle Paul, as they did also “the other scriptures” to their own destruction. That religion involves truths hard to be understood, is unquestionable. What of it? In the philosophy of nature, a child may ask a thousand questions which Sir Isaac Newton could not explain. But what of it? Shall we close our eyes on the beauty, and our ears against the melodies of this glorious creation? When we warn men to flee from the wrath to come, they talk of “*election*.” Whether men believe they *can*, or *cannot* repent, the result is *the same*:—the first, postpone it indefinitely; and the last lie down in indifference. Many a man who wishes to avoid the duty of believer’s baptism, thinks he finds a sufficient reason in the odium of restricted communion. “All men do not think alike,” therefore “the salvation of our souls is of no consequence to us.” Such reasoning on any other subject would be denounced as indicative of insanity. On religion it is very good. And yet our Maker, Ruler, Governor, Judge, bears with us. When we look abroad on the earth and see its idolatries, and crimes, and corruptions, its godlessness: we wonder that all is not swept away with the besom of destruction. In regard to the incorrigibly impenitent, one would be apt to think they are borne with, that they may find their ultimate overthrow the less tolerable. But our text says not. It is that God would have all to come to repentance.

II. “He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance:” this is the reason why “he is long-suffering to us-ward.”

If there be any one great question to which all others should be held subordinate, it is, “*How* will the Judge of all *dispose* of me?” “*What* is to be my doom *forever*?” The text decides one thing for you. If you perish, it is

your fault, not God's. "He is not willing that *any* should perish." I know what your cavilling will answer—it is; that if God is omnipotent, and chooses to save you, he can do it. This is impious—yet the scoffer and the worldling both say it.

The truth is, you have never studied the subject. Perhaps you have studied law ten years, and religion not ten hours. To learn your mechanic art, you have labored seven years; but the art of religion not seven hours. To amass a fortune, fifty years are but a moment; but to gain heaven, an hour is eternity. But here is a truth that requires no study. If you perish, the fault is not God's, but your's.

Do you ask me for illustration? You see it even in the law—that hard master—that yoke—that "do and live" system, from which the gospel releases us. "Thou shalt have no strange gods in my sight; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness, &c., for I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; but showing mercy to the thousandth of them that love me." If his judgments, even under the law, go to the third and fourth, his compassions go to the thousandth.

Does his glorious goodness pass before Moses? "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, showing mercy to thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin;" and if the sublime description does contain the awful words, "By no means clearing the guilty," it is not until the *last resort*. Truly was it said to Israel, "All day long have I stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people." "As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but that he turn from his wickedness and live." God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but he has pleasure in his repentance and life; and he swears it. "As I live saith the Lord." And yet you trifle with his forbearance. To reason, or to persuade, would seem to be in vain. To make men good is not a work of omnipotence, but of grace. And no man was ever made good *unwillingly*. It is true that you are in the hands of God. And unless his electing love, and the sacrifice of his Son, and the sovereign interference of his grace, prevent, you must perish; but this

is made certain by your own temerity, not his severity. If you will not come to Christ that you may have life, Divine goodness is under no obligation to come to your rescue by force.

I know the thousand objections you make, and you ought to know they are futile.

Although this is not a professor's chair from which to teach metaphysics, but a pulpit from which to persuade men "to repentance," I will mention one and expose it.

I heard it for the first time adduced, with great skill, and sustained with power, some years ago, by the late learned and talented President, Thomas R. Dew, in a fire-side discussion with the lamented Rev. I. T. Hinton, late of New Orleans, but then of this city. Hinton had just preached on Divine Decrees and Human Agency, in which he advocated both and their consistency; and Dew afterwards proposed to him this difficulty: "Suppose some one of these non-elect, it matters not what you call them, I use the term for the sake of distinction, of those who finally will *not* be saved, *were*, suppose he *were to accept*; you say *he can*—that the means are provided—that every thing is ready—*suppose he were to accept*, would there not be one in heaven not within the contemplated plan of salvation?"

Such a difficulty, if it weighs any thing, weighs as much against the foreknowledge of God, as against his purposes; and the consequent certainty with him of all things future. But foreknowledge is essential to Deity. And future events cannot be certainly known even to Deity, unless they be certain; nor can their certainty be predicated on any thing short of Divine efficiency. By whatever instruments God effects his purposes, he is the sole cause—governing all things; yet without violating human freedom and accountability.

Notwithstanding all the provisions made, and they are ample, not a sinner would be saved, if God did not interpose for his salvation in a way in which he does not interpose for those who are lost. For all concur in refusing every communication and opposing every condition he makes to them. To save any and not all, is therefore election, unless it be true that men who repent make themselves to differ, and thus save themselves by being better than others. This is not the salvation of the gospel. What God

does to-day being right, was always lawful for him to design to do. His present agency and his purposes are therefore co-incident. With these are parallel, his foreknowledge and the certain futurity of the things themselves. Hence to reject the doctrine of Divine purposes, including election, is to avow atheism, unless we *suppose* a God, as Dr. Clarke has done, *without foreknowledge*.

Uncertainty in all things is to my thoughts, terrific in the extreme. I rejoice in the government of God. You forget that he is Benefactor, Friend, Father, Saviour, Lawgiver, Governor, Judge—all. It may be essential to the happiness and safety of the universe, that he punish the incorrigible offender; and that he do no more than he does, for the salvation of those who reject the gospel and are lost.

When God bids us act, we need not hesitate, and ought not, nor do we but at our own peril. It matters not whether I am worthy, if he makes me welcome to the gospel feast. He bids me come. I know, therefore, with certainty more than mathematical, that if I desire to come, and come, there can be no ancient decree, nor any agency in the universe, that can forbid me. And I know that the provisions are ample: because if they were not, I should not be invited. Yet such is my own waywardness, that I also know, I should not be inclined to accept, had he not graciously disposed me.

Let us then bring this thing to a practical issue. What do you say? What do you? Will you postpone, and that indefinitely, as you have already done a thousand times or more? Then I have no hope for you. True, you may yet come and be saved, but I have no hope of it. You reject the offer to-day; and I know nothing of to-morrow. This meeting was called, and this discussion has been had for a practical purpose, of momentous import, involving all your interests now and forever. We cannot dismiss it without a decision. If you do not vote *viva voce*, nor by ballot, you vote. Your hearts say aye or no. So God takes your acceptance or your rejection of his offer. What do you? The result is only known to yourselves and to God, never to be revealed till the last day. God grant that many, that all, may have said, "Lord, I accept thy gracious offer to be saved through the gospel of thy dear Son." Amen.

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EARLY PIETY:

A sermon by Rev. WILLIAM HILL JORDAN, of Warrenton, N. C., preached at the funeral of Miss Frances Adeline Burton, daughter of Rev. H. A. Burton and Mrs. Margaret Burton, of Granville Co., N. C. Published by request.

"Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth."—EccL. xii. 1.

The impressive admonition contained in these words, is well worthy, in itself, my friends, of our serious consideration, and specially appropriate to the solemn occasion which assembles us this day. While we stand around the grave of departed youth, snatched suddenly from all the joys of existence, and consigned, in the morning of life, and in the full bloom of vernal promise, to the dark mansions of the tomb, we feel that there is a voice in the mournful scene harmonizing with the voice of revelation, in the solemn admonition, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." In the solemnity of such an occasion, we are supplied with a more impressive commentary upon the spirit of our text, than can be done by the tones of any living preacher.

The passage and the occasion unitedly suggest to our minds the subject of *early piety*. To this subject, permit me to invite your attention, while I shall endeavour to avail myself of the authority of revelation, and the lessons of Providence, to impress upon the minds of the young the importance of religion. In enforcing this subject, I shall speak,

1. Of the *duty* of early piety.
 2. Of its *benefits*; and
 3. Of the advantages which the young enjoy for attaining to the practice, and securing the blessings of religion.
1. The duty of early piety is sufficiently manifest, from the very words employed in the text to inculcate this duty.

It is our *Creator* whom we are admonished to remember.—By that sacred and impressive name does God claim our early affections. And certainly, it will be admitted, we ought to remember the God who made us. It is equally the dictate of the understanding and the conscience—the intellect and the heart—that we should yield to him the homage of our early affection, and that we should seek our happiness in his knowledge and his favor. All that is dear and sacred in the parental relation, lends its authority for enforcing the obligation of early affection and gratitude, to the God of our being. Hence, in a manner equally forcible and tender, does God utter his complaint against the unnatural ingratitude of his ancient people, “If I be a *father*, where is my honor?” And still more remarkable is the language in which, like an aggrieved and disappointed father, he vents the affliction of his soul in those wonderful words, so full of condescension and mercy, “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” The unnatural and odious conduct, forming so flagrant a violation of every principle of natural affection, is a sufficient argument to enforce the contrary duty of filial acknowledgment of the goodness of God, and filial affection for his character.

We cannot, indeed, reflect upon our being, with any seriousness, without being impressed with a reverential sense of the wisdom and power, as well as the benevolence of God, and without conceiving a sentiment of that filial tenderness and adoration, due to our Almighty and beneficent Creator.

How devoutly eloquent is the holy Psalmist, in his meditations upon the wisdom and power of God, displayed in his formation: “Thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance; yet being imperfect, and in thy book, all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

It might be supposed that a sentiment of *rational curiosity*, would prompt an inquiry in an intelligent mind after the author of so wonderful a production as we find in our own nature. Still more, that a sentiment of *moral esteem* would de-

size an acquaintance with the source of so much wisdom and goodness. While, especially, *natural affection and filial love* would inspire the exclamation in a mind awaking to a consciousness of its dignity, Where is God, my Maker and my Father! If, from a sentiment of *natural affection*, we are bound to love our earthly parents, still more sacred and impressive is the obligation to reverence and love the God who made us.

The *goodness* of God imposes the obligation of a filial recollection of his Being, and of filial devotion to his service.—From the first moment of our hapless being, through every period of a life of constant exposure and liability to danger, God has defended and nurtured us with the most tender care. How mercifully has he supplied our wants! How has he blessed us with kind parents, to whom our happiness has ever been as dear as their own lives! With what valuable opportunities of instruction has he furnished us! How has he been nigh to us, in the hour of sickness and pain; delivering us from death, reprieving our sin-forfeited lives, and restoring us to renewed health and enjoyment! Against how many dangers have we been guarded by his unseen hand? With what paternal vigilance has he watched over us, in scenes of folly and of sin, intent only upon doing us good, when we have been unmindful of him, and saving us from the ruin into which our folly would blindly have precipitated us! And especially, how great has been the goodness of God, in sparing us, as he has done, in our sins, and in sending his Son into the world to die for our salvation.

Does not *gratitude* demand a sensibility to such mercy, and an acknowledgment of such benefits? Do not such considerations impress more forcibly the exhortation of the text, “Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.”

We must feel still more sensibly the obligation of a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness, if we reflect upon the *condescension* of God, not only in the relation which he has been pleased to institute between creatures such as we are, and himself, but *in claiming and soliciting at our hands the acknowledgment of this relation, and the fulfilment of its appropriate duties*. This consideration becomes yet more affecting if we reflect, that he claims the tribute of our early affection, as a sacrifice peculiarly grateful to his feelings of paternal benevolence. He rejoices in the fresh

and untainted incense of our primal love, as a fond parent rejoices in the opening smile of lovely infancy, and the unfolding beauty of early childhood. And as we enjoy a peculiar sweetness in the love of our children, while they fold the tendrils of their affections around the parental trunk, overspreading it with their verdure and bloom, so does the blessed God regale, as we may say, his heart of paternal kindness with the early piety and devotion of his children. When, therefore, our Creator requires that we should remember him in the days of our youth, he desires of us that gratification which a fond parent enjoys, in the fresh and ingenuous, and pure affections of his artless child. What a tender appeal to the hearts of the young, to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

If we consider the *character* of the Being whom, as our Creator, we are required to remember, our obligation to comply with this duty will appear with additional force. For this Being is none other than the great and most holy God. Hence, in addition to the obligation enforced by a principle of natural affection for a parent, and gratitude for a benefactor, is *that* obligation which is derived equally from a law of our moral nature, and from the law of God, to honor and esteem whatever is great and good: the obligation, in other words, to render due homage to virtue and to greatness. And this obligation exists, in the present case, in its greatest possible force. For he who has created us, is, too, the Almighty Maker of heaven and of earth; the sovereign Lord of all beings; the God of universal dominion. All that is impressive in majesty, and all that is tender in goodness, combine to enforce the obligation of rendering unto the Lord "the glory due unto his name." It is He, who has stretched the bright heavens over our heads. It is He, whose creative power is displayed in all animated existence, and the riches of whose wisdom and goodness abound in all the earth. He has written his great name in all the frame-work of creation. It floats upon the fleecy clouds. It shines in the starry firmament. It is seen in the majesty of mountains and floods. It is pencilled in the hues of the rainbow, and interwoven in the beauty of the modest flowret of the vale. The voice of God is in them *all*. They all proclaim our Maker's being, and sing his praise. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

Our Creator is, too, the *most holy God*. Whatever is excellent in virtue; whatever is amiable in goodness; whatever is sacred in purity; whatever is venerable in justice; dwell in their perfect, unsullied and underived excellence in the God from whom we derive our being. All mortal—indeed, all created excellence—as compared, at least, with Deity—is tarnished with some imperfection. “There is none good but one; that is *God*.” He only is a Being of immutable holiness—of incorruptible virtue, and unwasting perfection. In him alone are we permitted to contemplate beauty, unsullied by the least possible deformity. “He is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” He pours a blinding radiance upon all the bright things of heaven; while the glorious multitude which stand before his throne, adore him still, in the darkness with which he surrounds himself; and from the profoundest depths of self-abasement into which they sink, send up their deep-toned hallelujahs to Him “who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” It is impossible to be indifferent to the character and claims of such a Being, without a guilty insensibility to whatever is great, venerable and good. To forget such a God, is to forget, at once, our duty, our honor, and our happiness. To remember him, according to his gracious commandment, is to elevate ourselves to an alliance with the great Source of life and blessedness, and in his knowledge and service, to find that proper employment for our faculties, in which consist the dignity and perfection of our nature.

If, then, we consider our relation to God as our *Creator*—if we reflect upon his *goodness* to us—if we consider *the excellence and greatness of his character*—if we reflect upon his *condescension* in seeking our affections as a source of benevolent enjoyment to his paternal heart, from all these considerations, we shall see reason for being impressed with the duty of early piety, and for acknowledging that it is reasonable and right, that we should remember God, our Creator, in the days of our youth.

2. Having thus enforced the *duty* of early piety, we come now to speak of its *benefits*.

Godliness is indeed profitable to *all* persons, at *all* times, and under *all* circumstances, seeing “it has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” It is, however, of such advantages as are peculiar to early piety,

that we propose now more particularly to speak. And in exhibiting these advantages, let us refer—

To the greater happiness which they enjoy, who become pious when they are young, than is enjoyed by those whose piety is delayed to an advanced age.

If religion be a blessing, and especially such a blessing as we are in the habit of supposing—if it bring not only future safety, but present happiness, there is a manifest advantage in the earliest practicable possession of such a blessing. Of that which is regarded as a source of happiness, we ever desire the *immediate* possession; since happiness is not a matter to be delayed, and no one is afraid of possessing it too soon. We are, indeed, ever impatient for its enjoyment. We know that it is one of the most rugged lessons of early discipline, to wait with patience the tardy hour to which we look, in the hope of happiness. So violently does our nature propel us toward this point, that we are constantly in danger of breaking loose from our restraint, of seizing with impatient hand the unripe fruit, and of crushing with too rude a grasp the flower which we hoped was to have proved of immortal bloom and fragrance. Who becomes rich too soon? Who comes too soon into possession of the honors and pleasures of the world? Who, too soon, are admired for their wisdom, or their fame, or their beauty? Those are regarded as the most fortunate, who come into the earliest possession of these advantages; because in such possession, they promise themselves a happiness, which, however, they rarely find. They toil, alas! for that which is not bread. They look for grapes, where they are doomed ever to be pierced with thorns. But in the knowledge of God; in the enjoyment of his favor, and the hope of his salvation, there is, of a truth, found *that happiness*, which is the object of such universal and such ardent pursuit; and in the vain hope of which, the mind of man explores, with ever-restless wing, the various scenes of earthly joy. He who gathers fruit from the tree of life, and plucks his flowers from the garden of Eden, does indeed secure to himself an immortality of pleasure. They shall shed a fragrance which shall never fail to afford certain delight, and furnish a repast which shall satisfy the appetite of the immortal soul. And can we come too soon into the possession of this happiness? Can we too soon feel the joys of pardoning mercy, or too soon find for our guilty souls, peace through the

blood of the Lamb? Can we too soon be delivered from the slavery of sin, the dominion of sensuality, the vassalage of Satan, the sting of guilt, and the fear of hell? Can we become too soon children of the most high God, and heirs of a glorious immortality? How vain are all earthly joys and dignities, compared with such blessings! Who would not prefer, as the chosen heritage of his child, that he should possess rather the gem of true piety, than wear the brightest diadem that ever sparkled upon an aching brow? What purity—what elevation of character belongs to the youth, who, spurning the deceits of earth, and acknowledging the rightful claims of his Maker, consecrates himself, in the morning of life, and in the freshness of youth, to the service of his God! How lovely a flower is early piety! Its odors, more precious than those of the far-famed Araby, shed an ambrosial perfume through all the atmosphere, regaling the heart of virtue, and impressing, by their purity, upon every mind, a conviction of their celestial origin! Lovely flower! Beautiful and majestic! The admiration of man! The delight of God!

The possession of early piety is, then, the possession of *early happiness*. And just so much as we value the one, so much should we seek the other. In the degree, too, in which the possession of *immediate* happiness, in the spring-tide of life, and in the full and unimpaired possession of all our faculties for enjoyment, is to be preferred to a distant, not to say an uncertain happiness, in the same degree, is early piety to be preferred to the piety which is delayed to an advanced period of life. To delay our piety, is to delay our true happiness, and to deprive ourselves of the only blessings which impart any value to our existence. For it were better not to live at all, than to live in a state of unnatural separation from God, deprived of all sense of his favor, and exposed, at every step of our progress, to his heavy displeasure.

If these views, my friends, be correct—of which, I am persuaded, you can scarcely entertain a doubt—we see how deceitful and treacherous is the objection to early religion—that we are required, for its attainment, to sacrifice the pleasures of life.

That the pleasures of *sin* must be sacrificed to the enjoyment of God's favor, there would be neither piety nor benevolence in denying: since, by teaching a contrary doctrine,

we should be misrepresenting God, and deceiving men. For sin is equally inconsistent with the honor of God, and the happiness of man. But sin itself is not less our shame and misery, than it is our condemnation. Promising us liberty, it subjects us to the most hateful bondage. Deceiving us with promises of happiness, it pours the waters of bitterness and death along the whole path of our being; and in the agonies of a dying hour, derides the folly which was deceived by its flatteries. The happiness which it persuades us, we must sacrifice for religion, is to be found alone in religion itself.—Through its deceits, we are entangled in the delusion that we part with our happiness, by that conduct, by which alone, it is possible to secure it; and that we secure enjoyment by the means which are the certain and fruitful source of bitter misery. Alas! my friends, sin never made a creature happy. Like the treacherous mirage, it allures, only to practise upon us the most cruel deceit. Its flowers crumble to dust in our hands. Its Elysium becomes as we enter it a barren, blighted wilderness;—and while we feed upon the food which we have fondly supposed to be the bread of heaven, and the fruit of Paradise, we find, too late, that it is the ashes of bitterness, and the apples of Sodom. Let, then, the deceit be banished forever into the darkness in which it originated, that in becoming religious, we cease to be happy—that in serving our God, we sacrifice our liberty; and that in accepting the consolations of Christ, the enjoyments of holiness, the favor of God, and the hope of heaven, we resign a single object, other than what forms the source of our shame—our degradation—and our ruin. Strange fatuity, indeed, of the human mind, by which it suffers itself to be deceived into the miserable delusion, that to be delivered from the bondage of sin and guilt, *is to become enslaved*—that to be saved from hell, *is to resign our happiness*—and that to rejoice in the love of God, and in the blissful hope of a happy immortality, *is to extinguish all sensibility to enjoyment!* Let us rather rejoice in the blessed assurance, that “wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace:” That “the favor of the Lord is life, and his loving kindness is better than life.”

So far, then, from being required to sacrifice our happiness to religion, religion is urged upon us as the only true source

of happiness; and by our regard to the one, we are warned not to neglect the other.

By early piety, *we escape the evils of protracted impenitence.* The pious youth enjoys the happiness of reflecting, that his life has not been worn out in the service of sin—that he has not wasted its flower and prime in pursuit of vanity, reserving only the shreds of his being for God, and presenting to him the sacrifice of that being; not until it has become attenuated by age, impaired by sin, despoiled of its beauty, rifled of its fragrance, and prostituted to every object of sinful pleasure. How much vanity, sin and misery does he thus happily escape! From what scenes of vice and folly is he protected by the shield of piety, which he has wisely thrown around his unguarded youth! He has fortified himself by heavenly wisdom, against the smiles of wanton pleasure; smiling ever to deceive. He has chastened his appetite against the charms of her Circean cup, concealing in its depths the fatal poison. He has guarded his ear against her syren song, which would allure him down to the dark chambers of the dead. Oh! what dangers beset the path of unguarded youth, into which they are continually liable to be betrayed. The world spreads its blandishments before their charmed and unsuspecting eyes. The forbidden fruits of worldly pleasure hang in rich clusters all around them, captivating their hearts by their golden hues, while the tempter is ever whispering to their excited imagination, “Thou shalt not die.” Beware, young people, of his deceitful tongue! Fly from his wiles, and seek, in *early piety*, your only protection against the dangers to which you are exposed. Happy the youth who, obeying the counsels of wisdom, hastens his escape from these dangers, and finds protection and safety in God, the Tower of his strength, and the Rock of his salvation. *Happy youth!* like Mary, the devout handmaid of the Lord, he has chosen for himself that good part, which shall never be taken away from him. “Wisdom’s ways” he finds to be “ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.” Life, with him, is sacred to the purpose for which it was given—the service of his God, and the preparation of his soul for a blissful immortality.

Let us contemplate the benefit of early piety in *the security it brings, against the awful danger to which, without it, we are continually exposed, of dying in our sins.* This

single reflection, it would seem, were sufficient to dash every cup of sinful pleasure, and pour a bitterness into every fountain of mortal enjoyment. If the giddy youth, as he drives on in his career of vanity—as he abandons himself to the tide of worldliness, would only ask his soul, intoxicated and delirious with worldly enjoyment,—“Where, my immortal spirit! may'st thou be this night? *What scenes*, unprepared as thou art, may in a moment succeed these scenes of carnal revelry?” Oh! how could he endure the terrors of his condition! How terrible the sound, from an abused and righteous God, “Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” And there is not a moment of his life, in which this fearful arrest may not fall upon the thoughtless worldling, in which he may not lose his soul forever! For that soul, once lost, what, alas! will he give in exchange? How alarming that declaration of the Lord Jesus, to the rebellious Jews, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins!” *To die in our sins!* Who can calculate the import of that awful word? To this fearful doom is *every* impenitent sinner exposed *every* moment of his life. From this danger, he has safely and forever escaped. He has committed himself to God. He has reached the city of refuge, and found everlasting protection from his pursuing enemy. And oh! how unspeakable is the blessing he enjoys in the possession of such safety! He has reached that happy point; stands upon that *eternal Rock*, where he may contemplate with peace, with joy and with praise, the dangers he has escaped, and the safety he now enjoys. The great transaction of reconciliation has passed between God and his soul. He has passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. The mercy of a pardoning God has been sealed upon his soul by the spirit of his grace. “Being justified by faith,” he has “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Let then dread death come when he may! *Come* with his icy hand, and his benumbing touch! Undismayed, he is prepared to meet his last enemy. He comes—not to tear him from his treasures, but to bear him to them. It has been Christ, to him, to *live*. To *die* will be his everlasting gain.

There is another danger to which the young are exposed, so long as they neglect the claims of religion, and against which they will find their security only in early piety. It is

the danger of becoming, hopelessly and irretrievably, hardened in sin.

So long as we live without religion, so long it remains an awful uncertainty, whether we ever shall obtain it. And the improbability is continually increasing with the delay. So evidently true is this observation, and so rapidly, after passing the threshold of youth, does the heart acquire that obduracy, so fatal to its future hopes, that the conversion of a person after he has passed the age of forty, may be regarded as a serious improbability. And he who has lived to that age without repentance, has awful reason to fear he will die without it. Short as is the sin-forfeited life of man, it is long enough, in many unhappy cases, for him to outlive all hope of salvation, and to reach that fearful point, where he is forsaken of the aggrieved Spirit of God—abandoned to his lusts and to Satan—for whom we are forbidden to pray, and who lives only, in the just judgment of God, to fill up the measure of his iniquity, and to fit himself for destruction. Such is the danger, connected with delay in religion: a danger of such magnitude that he who has any right apprehension of it, would embrace with transport the martyr's stake, before he would expose his soul to such a peril. The cares of life, the anxieties and distractions of business, will soon come, to interfere with the claims of piety and the interests of the soul. We are constantly exposed, until we have decided for God, to the danger of evil associations and corrupting influences. So long as we withhold our feet from the path of life, we shall be in danger of being carried by the rushing multitude along the broad road of death. Sinners will entice; and until we shall have purified our hearts by consecration to God, we shall ever be in danger of consenting to their allurements, and being betrayed into ruin. From the evil influences prevailing around us, and the sympathetic depravity of our hearts, we shall be in danger, too, at no distant period, of imbibing *bad principles*; poisoning thus the very source of feeling and action, and becoming, if not *professed*, at least *practical* infidels. Bad conduct will soon require bad principles for its defence. Hence, many a man has become an infidel, not so much from conviction, as from a disposition to harmonize his principles with the evil course he was determined not to forsake. Many, who would be alarmed at the name of infidels, do, nevertheless, exhibit this species of practical

infidelity, by which, being unable to bring their conduct to their principles, they desperately determine to bring their principles to their conduct. Thus does sin harden the heart and embolden it in sin, until he who, in the beginning, could only consent to its solicitations, with the promise of future amendment, at length rushes into its embrace, with the atheistic declaration, There is no harm in it.

The tyranny of *habit*, too, if you persist in sin, will soon be established in your nature. The tyrant, invited by the manner in which you expose yourselves to his inroads, will come to crown the process of deterioration, and stamp upon the character his black and fatal seal. Your leach-like lusts, long used to indulgence, with ceaseless clamor, which will not be denied, will demand their accustomed gratification.—Then, natural depravity combining with sinful practice, you will be borne by their united flood, scarcely resisting, into the gulf of ruin. Your enemy will then have fastened his chains upon you, and you may break them if you can. *Then* may you do it—when the Ethiopian has changed his skin, and the leopard his spots.

Alas! how many unhappy cases are to be found, of those, who have thus survived all religious sensibility. They would, but cannot feel. They are convinced of the truth of the gospel, and their need of its blessings; but they are destitute of all heart to seek these blessings. They are sensible of their unhappy condition; but cannot, nevertheless, lament that condition. Hardened in heart—blighted in spirit—unhappy in life, and hopeless for death, they stand, monumental witnesses of the danger of disregarding the voice of conscience, of grieving the Spirit of God, and turning a deaf ear to the invitations of grace.

3. Let us now speak of the advantages enjoyed by the young, for attaining the blessing of piety. These advantages will be found to be of such nature, as to enforce most impressively the injunction, “Remember *now* thy Creator, in the days of thy youth.”

We know, indeed, that salvation is to be ascribed entirely to the holy and adorable sovereignty of a merciful God. We know, however, with equal certainty, that this great principle of divine truth is not to be interpreted so as to impair, *in the least degree whatever*, either the value or the responsibility connected with these advantages.

It will evidently appear, from what we have now said, that young persons enjoy a very great advantage in seeking the blessings of religion—in *the early and unimpaired sensibilities of their moral nature*; rendering them much more susceptible of pious influence than is the case with those who have unhappily succeeded in stifling the voice of conscience and extinguishing all religious sensibility. In youth, the heart is tender, the affections lively, and the imagination is easily impressed with the great truths of religion. What child has not felt his heart affected with the deepest solemnity, as he has thought of the judgment to come—when the trump of the descending Son of God shall awake the dead from their graves, and each one, of all the family of Adam, shall be called to abide the decisions of the last great day?—What youth, who has not felt his conscience arrested amid the gaieties of life, by those solemn words of the Lord Jesus, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” What young person, as he has looked upon the pale face of the dead, has not felt that there was a voice in those sealed and bloodless lips—the voice of death itself—preaching the vanity of man, the terrors of the tomb, and the retributions of eternity; and invoking him, by the sepulchral lessons around him, to prepare to meet his God? And who among you, my young friends, as he has heard of the peace of the departing saint, has not sighed within his inmost soul, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” As yet, young people, you are not insensible to such tender, such sacred appeals. The love of the world, and the perverting influence of sin, have not as yet destroyed the native ingenuousness of your nature, and extinguished the sensibility of your heart. A righteous God has not as yet abandoned you to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. You are not as yet branded with the mark of a fatal insensibility—indicating that you are “past feeling,” and stamping you the subjects of an eternal reprobation.—Your comparatively undepraved minds can as yet respond with emotion to the solemn exhortations of a merciful God—“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” As yet, my young friends, it is to be hoped that you can feel these solemn appeals. Obey these im-

pulses of mercy, and your souls shall live. You can neglect them only at the hazard of your everlasting well-being.— Cherish, while yet you can appreciate them, these solemn monitions, which warn you of hell, and invite you to heaven. “*Now*,” while your heart can yet feel the claims of truth; while it can melt at the appeals of mercy; while the solemn sound of death and eternity fall impressively upon your spirit—before guilt shall have paralyzed all effort, and sealed your lips in silence, interdicting alike all prayer, and all hope;—“*now* is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.” “To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

In their exemption from the oppressive and vexatious cares which await subsequent life, the young enjoy a great advantage for seeking and securing the blessings of religion. No dependent families look to them for protection, and claim their bread at their hands. No anxious schemes weigh down their spirits. It is not by daily toil and anxiety that they must obtain their daily bread; but they enjoy the bounties of Providence, as free from care, as the sparrows which flutter over their heads. This is the period when the mind, exempted from every other care, is free to employ its unclaimed and undivided energy in seeking God and securing his favor.— Now, therefore, is the time when, not only from the importance of the duty itself, but on account of the peculiar advantages which facilitate its performance, the young should open their hearts to the full influence of the Saviour’s exhortation, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” This is the auspicious period when, like the holy Timothy, they should study those sacred page, which impart the knowledge of eternal life; and like the young and consecrated Samuel, offer up their tender age to the service of their God. Yes! it is in youth—before we shall be encumbered and oppressed with the thickening cares of this vain world—before the disappointed heart shall sigh in secret over its departed joys, and the wounded spirit shall bleed in solitude and in silence, that the soul should claim communion with its God, and seek in his friendship a solace for its troubles—a balm for its wounds. Soon age will come, with his benumbing hand, and his palsying touch. Oppressed with its infirmities and pains, then will not be the time for the vigorous effort, by which heaven is to be gained, and the soul is to be saved. The decaying facul-

ties will not then be easily interested in the truths which they have disregarded in early life. The sluggish spirit will then, with difficulty, be aroused to an apprehension of its danger. The torpid conscience, long since benumbed, can be awaked to no serious emotion. The heavy eyes, scarcely lifting their lids, will close them again in sleep. Then will come the time when you shall say, I have no pleasure in these things. Then will depart the joys of sense. Then will cease the charms of music. Then will be gone the friends of youth. Then shall we stand a solitary mourner over their graves—the light of life extinguished, and the shadows of an eternal night gathering upon us. Oh! the danger of growing old in sin, and of neglecting, while we are young, the proper improvement of our precious opportunities.

Another advantage of a peculiarly interesting character, which the young enjoy, is to be found *in the many gracious promises with which a God of paternal kindness encourages them to seek his face, and secure his favor.* With the most benignant condescension, does he seek to win to himself the youthful heart, and to court our tender age under the covert of his Almighty wings. “I love them,” he says, “that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me.” “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Such are the expressions of the kind and merciful disposition of God, our heavenly Father, to our early age. He views us weak and unprotected. He desires to become our Almighty Friend. He sees us advancing into a world of sorrow and trial. He offers us a pillow upon the bosom of his love. He beholds us encompassed with danger. He extends to us that hand, which will guide and guard us through every danger, and conduct us safely into that happy land, where dangers shall be no more.

But these advantages, my young friends, will soon belong to you no longer. Youth will soon depart, and with it will depart all those gracious promises and encouragements which God has bestowed upon this interesting period of your life.—But your salvation will still remain to be accomplished, and under circumstances greatly increasing the improbability of its accomplishment. We will not say, (God forbid!) that you may not still be saved. But we repeat, the fearful improbability of your salvation will be greatly increased. Lose

not, then, my young friends, this auspicious period of your life, for securing the favor of your God, and the salvation of your soul. Youth is too precious a season—too rich in promise, to be wasted in folly and squandered in wanton disregard of its priceless advantages. It is the rudimental period of our existence; and its elementary influence is likely to impress itself, with enduring power, upon the future stamp of our character. Fly, then, from the dangers which surround you, and find everlasting protection in the outspread arms of your God and your Saviour.

It becomes necessary that we shall refer, in the conclusion of our discourse, more particularly to the solemn event which assembles us this day, to mingle our united sympathies and tears over the grave of a departed young friend. We come to weep together, as we remember, the amiable, the kind, the gentle, the tender-hearted Adeline, is in her grave! While we would bow submissively under the afflicting hand of a righteous God, we know that our compassionate Father forbids not, that on so mournful an occasion, our souls should pour forth their grief, or that we should bedew the fresh sod, beneath which reposes the dust of her we loved, with the tribute of our tears.

And at whose grave shall we weep, if not at the grave of the young, the lovely, the interesting Adeline? Who will not pause, and heave a sigh, and drop a tear upon the fresh grave of this young virgin? that one so young, so joyous, so full of life, so bright with hope, should be cut down in the sweet morning of life, and like a tender flower, nipped by an untimely frost, should hang her gentle head, and droop—and wither—and die!

Sweet sleeper! if the virtues which adorn the mind could have embalmed thy being—if the love of all who knew thee could have saved thee from the grave, thou hadst not died. Who was not the friend of Adeline? Of whom was not she the friend? Her amiable and affectionate disposition won every heart. *All* loved her, because she loved *all*. She poured out her soul among her friends in a stream of generous and gladdening confidence, while her sweet smile of friendly sympathy flung a brightness over every scene in which she moved.

But alas! “it is appointed unto man once to die.” In all his power and glory; in all his wisdom and virtue; in all his

amiability and beauty, he must descend soon to the dust. Like the grass, he flourisheth in the morning, and in the evening is cut down, and withereth. Relentless death will soon come to slay all human pride; and disregarding alike, the decrepitude of age and the smiles of infancy; the strength of manhood and the charms of beauty;—to consign the children of men to dust and to the worms.

The virtues of our departed young friend could not therefore save her from the tomb. As a child of Adam, inheriting with his fallen race a sinful and mortal nature, she must of necessity fulfil the decree, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” To us, my weeping friends, the only mournful office that remains to afflicted friendship, is, with our tears and our hopes, to commit that dust to the dust whence it came; the spirit is gone to God, who gave it. We shall see her no more, until the awakening trump of the descending Judge shall summon both her and us to stand before the great white throne. Of all that was the beloved Adeline, we are permitted to retain only the recollection of her virtues, to embalm her memory; and of her early fate, to admonish us of the uncertainty of all earthly things.

As the virtues of the departed could not save her from the grave, as little, let me add, could they prepare her for the judgment seat of Christ. Amiable and interesting as she was, as one of a fallen race, she needed a righteousness, better than any of her own, to meet the claims of God’s violated law, and to stand with acceptance before the righteous Judge. The great Teacher has left for our instruction, in the records of salvation, the abiding lesson, that he, who would meet his God in peace, must be born of the Spirit of his grace, and washed in the blood of the Lamb. The only dependence in which it will be safe for a transgressor of the divine law to appear in the presence of the holy God, is that of a guilty sinner, relying for mercy upon the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the crucified Son of God.

To the Almighty Saviour, we are not without hope, the Spirit of grace inclined the heart of our dear departed friend to look, for the help which she needed, and which he alone could give. Calling her afflicted parents to her bedside some short time before her death, she consoled them with the assurance that she had long been in the habit of praying and reading the word of God; particularly so for the last year of

her life. For some time, she had been possessed with a strong presentiment of an early death; and her mind had been much impressed with the words, "Prepare to meet thy God." She said that she was not afraid to die—expressing her concern only for the affliction which her parents would suffer on account of her death. Much prayer was offered up to God for her departing spirit; and we can but hope that the God of all mercy enabled her, in her last moments, to trust in his holy name, and to lay her dying head upon the great atoning sacrifice. He is good, and he is merciful. Into the hands of that God who so loved the world, as to give for its salvation his only begotten Son—as we commit our own souls—so do we commit the soul of our dear, departed young friend.

Beloved friends! who mourn over the grave of a dear and lovely child! I should be glad, if I could, to speak to you a word of comfort. Your loss, my friends, I know is great—your affliction sore. Ah! who can tell the pang that wrings the heart of a fond parent, as he consigns a beloved child to the remorseless grave. But weeping parents! though the condolence of mortal friendship may afford no sufficient balm for your lacerated souls, let me direct you to One, who *can* afford all needful comfort. There is an Almighty Friend—Oh! blessed be his name—whose sympathies can assuage the sorrows of your souls, and pour a healing balm into your bleeding hearts. Yes! Jesus is the mourner's friend. He—compassionate Saviour! at the grave of Lazarus, comforted the weeping sisters, and revived their disconsolate hearts with the words of his grace, and the triumphs of his mercy. This Almighty Jesus is equally able, my friends, to comfort you. His grace—his power—are still the same. His heart—*that heart*, on which alone the weary and afflicted can find repose—is still full of the tenderest sympathy; and he is still ready to achieve victories of mercy, for all that trust in his name. Look to him in the time of your distress. Oh! cry to him, from the very depths of your affliction. Lift up your afflicted souls to him, whose smile can brighten the darkest scene—whose love can sweeten the bitterest cup; and whose grace can convert the elements of sorrow and death into a source of life and salvation. Since it has pleased God to lay upon you his afflicting hand, let it be your concern, that this sore trial may prove a blessing to your souls. Pray that his

grace may sanctify the painful stroke, and that the bitter cup, which it has pleased your heavenly Father to put into your hands, may prove of the greatest medicinal virtue to your souls. The afflictions of this life, my friends, are of short duration. Our tears and our joys on earth, are alike momentary. While we are weeping for those we have lost, we ourselves are sinking into the tomb. There is but a step between you and your departed child. You, who now mourn her loss, will soon be down by her side; and your spirits, too, soon will follow her's into vast eternity. What remains, amid such scenes of sorrow and death, but that we take to ourselves the lesson taught us in the words of the apostle, "But this I say, brethren: the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." May you, my friends, together with your beloved children, through the mercy of our great Redeemer, when this scene of mortal affliction shall have closed, meet in that happy land, where tears shall all be wiped away, and those who love shall be separated no more forever.

To you, my dear young friends! the brothers and sisters of your departed sister, let me address a word of kind and affectionate sympathy and counsel. I feel, my friends, for you. Connected, as I am, by a long standing and intimate friendship with this bereaved family, I feel a solicitude, that you, its younger members, shall not fail to be benefitted by that solemn lesson, which now, in the day of adversity, in tones so loud and impressive, God is urging upon your youthful minds. Oh! young friends! it is with you a season of affliction—it is also a time of peril. A voice now speaks to you, which it will be dangerous to disregard. When will you repent, if you refuse to do it now? Oh! then, "To day—if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Listen to that voice, which comes up this day from the tomb of your departed sister,—“Brothers and sisters! prepare to meet your God. Remember my early death: and as you look upon your sister's grave, think of the words of the Lord Jesus,—‘Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.’” Let me beseech you, my young

friends, that in this day of trial and affliction, you will humble your hearts before God. Let the solemn manner in which he is now pleading with you, prevail with you to divorce yourself from the vanities of earth, and to seek in his favor a preparation for your own approaching end.

Young people! let me address to you *all*, a parting word of exhortation. I call upon you, my young friends, as we stand here, over the grave of your departed friend, in the name of the God who made you, to repent of your sins, and seek the salvation of your souls. Once more—before your bodies shall be crumbling into dust, and your immortal spirits shall have passed away to their unchanging destiny, the voice you so long have slighted, calls upon you to turn to God, and live. That voice, oh! heedless youth! cannot be disregarded with impunity much longer. Too late, I fear, you will learn your folly. Too late—begin to lament the trash for which you have sold an undying soul. Even now, I fear, you are more concerned for the vain amusements of the world, than for your immortal souls. Ah! vain, giddy, thoughtless youth, how long will ye persevere in the ways of death? Your way is dark, and leads to hell. Your sports and vain amusements, where are forgotten your Bible, your God and your soul, are the broad road that leads down to the chambers of the dead. God, who made you, is calling upon you, and warning you to escape in time from impending destruction. Wisdom's voice is sounding all day long in your ears, "Oh! ye simple, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart." "Hear, and your souls shall live." "Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you." "Turn ye! turn ye! for why will ye die?" The compassionate Jesus, with outstretched arms, is crying to you, Come ye exiles from your God! Come ye aliens from heaven! Come ye wanderers from your father's house! Come ye children of vanity—ye slaves of sin—ye heirs of misery. Hasten to the protection of my Almighty arms.—Fly from avenging justice to the sheltering Cross, before the night of death shall overtake you, and you perish in your sins. Amen.

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A NEW YEAR'S SERMON, OR TRUE GRATITUDE:

Preached by REV. J. W. M. Williams to his church in Lynchburg, January 1, 1850, and published by request.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not his benefits."—Psalm ciii: 2.

Through another year the Lord has redeemed our lives from destruction, and crowned us with loving kindness and tender mercies. In view of all this kindness and of all these mercies, it becomes us here, to-day, to call upon our souls, and upon all that is within us, to cherish a grateful recollection of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

The divisions of time, both natural and artificial, whether of hours, days, weeks, months or years, but especially of years, are exclamation points in our history, at each of which, we may fitly awake our souls to gratitude and praise. Thus let us try to improve the present hour.

In the words of our text, the Psalmist, by a well known figure of speech, puts the soul for the whole man; and by another, he addresses himself in the second person, and speaks to himself in the language of solemn exhortation: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." It is a beautiful characteristic of any language when the opposing negative fortifies the intended affirmative. "To forget not," expresses the idea of "remember" more strongly than does the word itself, "remember." "Thou shalt not kill," is a positive command to respect the life of our fellows. The first Burman

convert, in his celebrated hymn, understands the use of this powerful form of expression:

“O thou, my soul, forget no more
The friend, who all thy sorrows bore,
Let every idol be forgot,
But O my soul, forget him not.”

In pursuance of our object, we remark

1st. That forgetfulness of the divine benefits, is among the clear indications of our utter depravity. What was true of Israel in the days of Isaiah, is true of all men in every age. How does the prophet begin his discourse? “Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth: for the Lord hath spoken.” What had he spoken? Words of commendation? “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me; the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider.” Here we have *directly* charged upon the people the same offence that is *implied* in the language of our text.

Ingratitude is a great sin. Its companions are all forms of wickedness, and its end is ruin, unless divine grace prevent. In the case of the ten lepers, the nine afford a miniature likeness of our race. Of the ten cured, only one returned to give glory to God. How many, think ye, of this congregation, at the close of the year just ended, attempted to recall the countless mercies of God showered upon us? Probably the great mass had not one single emotion of gratitude. What should we think of ingratitude like this from a fellow creature? What must God think of us?

To the dissatisfied, the fault-finding, the vain-glorious, the peevish, the fretful, our text administers a sharp rebuke. Most of what we call troubles, disappointments, sorrows, deserve not the name. They are misnomers.

One of the infatuations of our poor fallen race is, that we remember—that our memories dwell with morbid tenacity—upon what we call the ills of life, while of its blessings we are totally thoughtless. And to aggravate the misery of the case, we are both brooding over the supposed calamities of the past, and apprehending those that are never to come. Can there be in this life a more guilty and miserable picture? A rational and immortal being, made after the image of God, and actually enjoying the sun-shine of his favor in ten thousands of its manifestations, so morally bewildered and insane,

as to be insensible only to the good, and alive only to the ill. Nay, worse, often to mistake the one for the other—to pine over mercies, and to rejoice in judgments.

2dly. Let us enumerate a few of the “benefits” of the past year.

Life is a great blessing. The young, the strong, the elastic, the gay, think it a matter of course; but this is a sad mistake. “In God’s hand our breath is, and his are all our ways.” The withdrawal, for one moment, of his all-sustaining hand, and we fall as the withered grass, whose roots have been clipped by the passing plough.

Of *health*, no man has ever probably formed any just conception, who has not been deprived of it. To know its value, you must either lose it, or receive some hint from the paralytic, the dyspeptic, the consumptive, the rheumatic, or some poor invalid, whose emaciation and groanings intimate his helplessness and pain. *Health*. Write this down in capital letters in the bill of the benefits of the past year.

Our *wealth* is, of course, our own creation, and our own preservation. Singular, universal, error! If our possessions, it matters not what they are, they are all we have, have not been destroyed by the midnight flame, nor taken by the midnight robber, it is because God has made our dwellings fire-proof, and has stayed the hand of the assassin.

In the preservation to us of our families—in the life of our husbands, wives, children, God has greatly prospered us another year. It is a remarkable fact, that of the whole number of this church, we have lost in a year only one member by death.

But to some of you, the past year has been the most distinguished of your whole lives. Its beginning found you in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. Its close finds you fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. All your previous life you had been unconsciously standing upon slippery places, while fiery billows rolled below. But you have been snatched as brands from the eternal burnings. You are now firmly fixed upon the rock of ages; and you look forward to the period when these earthly tabernacles will be substituted by a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Engrave this with a pen of iron on a monument of granite. So much for individual benefits. But we have been *collec-*

tively, as signally blessed. This has been a remarkable year in our church affairs. In addition to the regular ministration of the word, we have been encouraged to labor in a protracted meeting of more than three months. A cloud which had hung over us, threatening disaster, has been dissipated, admitting the pure light of the glorious Sun of Righteousness. The Lord has been in our midst. Nearly forty precious souls have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Petitions sent up from hearts strongly bound together in the bonds of brotherly love, have been answered in the conversion of husbands, wives, children, relations, Sunday scholars, friends, strangers. We have had the privilege and the honor of administering, in the presence of this community, ten or twelve Lord's days in succession, the ordinance of baptism.

In our gratitude and joy for the greater favors, we had almost lost sight of minor blessings. That awful scourge, the cholera, stood in abeyance. It came not near us. Over other cities he spread his sombre wings. Their population was filled with distress, and multitudes were carried to the house appointed for all living. But we have been exempt in this march of the pestilence, as we were also in its former ravages. Ascribe it not to climate, or location, or prudence, or chance. "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?"

Add to these items the countless blessings known only to your own hearts—the many strong temptations which, by the grace of God, you have resisted—and the many escapes you have made by that same grace: and then tell me, have you not reason to bless the Lord with all your souls and all that is within you? *All* the divine benefits—*all* of them—we cannot remember. The Bible, the preached gospel, the Sabbath school, liberty to worship God according to the dictates of your own conscience: we cannot remember *all*. But we wind up the whole in one comprehensive sum, and say in the language of the Apostle Paul: "We beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the *mercies* of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

3dly. We have reached a point in our discussion, in which you must be your own preachers. You must take the pen and the paper, and make out the third column yourselves.

Benefits reciprocated. I can tell of what God has done for you. What have you done for him?

It is a thought that never enters the mind of the unconverted man, that previous to our conversion, we never perform one single act, nor cherish one single thought, which meets the approbation of God. Not only have you not, my unconverted friends, reciprocated one in a thousand of the divine benefits, but in your whole life, you never have reciprocated *one*.

But, my brethren, some of you have long labored in the vineyard. Others are now beginning the work. The language of you all is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Now is the time for action. Every hour delayed is an hour lost. Pitch your crop and lay down your order of work.

In this part of the account, I can afford you some assistance.

Remember your obligations as church members. We are associated as a body of baptized believers—as friends of Christ—to hold forth the word of life—to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints—and to propagate it, at all hazards, the Lord assisting us in our honest labors. The truth is not to be concealed, that we are against the world and the world is against us. Our warfare is a warfare of love; but we aim at the conquest of the world, and the defence of the gospel of Christ. What, under such circumstances, is our duty?

In the first place, every member should be a *working* man. It will not do to say, we have the truth, and this is mighty and will prevail. It is true, that we have the truth, and that the truth will prevail. But it will not prevail without the instrumentality of the church, because this is the very means that God has ordained for its prevalence. A miserly religion, if there can be such, is of no value to others, and of little to the possessor. To make the capital productive, it must be safely and wisely invested. A mite well used, is better than millions unused. One talent employed to its uttermost, is better than ten or ten thousand wrapped in a napkin and hid.

As in every church, so in this, there are diversities of gifts. We can all do something. Do you inquire, what can I do? I will tell you a few things, and leave the rest to your own reflections.

Be punctual in attendance at all your meetings. This will encourage the heart of your pastor—be a mutual prop,

holding up the whole church—and one of the most effectual means of impressing favorably all who behold you or the church to which you belong. What would become of a bank, whose directors neglected its regular meetings for business? It must itself become bankrupt. This is the great secret of the success of that society which is now exerting, next to the church, the most powerful influence against the greatest enemy to religion and morals, with which we are called to battle:—The Order of the Sons of Temperance. Punctuality encourages the heart of your pastor. He is a man of like passions with yourselves, and needs your sympathy and co-operation. And as regards the community, you cannot expect them to honor services and objects about which you are indifferent. If you expect the public to be here, and are yourselves absent, you are like those who invite guests and leave with their servants the message, Not at home. You cannot expect another visit, without explanation and apology.

It is the church that makes the minister. I do not mean that God does not bestow the talents, nor grant the success. He does both. I do not mean that schools and colleges are useless. They are not. But with inferior gifts and limited education—with a church rallying around him and cheering him onward by their personal presence and co-operation, a pastor will do more than the most towering intellect could do, with the vastest attainments besides, if he must drag his church after him. Either he is crushed, or he seeks relief in another field.

The Sunday school appeals to you for support. Be teachers, or pupils, or both, or visiters and advocates of the cause. Since I have been your pastor, nearly twenty from the Sunday school have been added to the church: almost one-half of its entire accession.

There are other ways of doing good, to enlarge upon which, time forbids. In this community there are four thousand people who attend no church. If you are acquainted with any of them, invite their attendance—if not, become acquainted for that very purpose. Bring them with you saying, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good."

Tract distribution opens a fine field for benevolent and pious effort. Ladies in other cities find this a convenient and useful department of labor. I earnestly hope the ladies

of this church and congregation will engage in this good work.

The poor, too, have claims upon you which you will not resist. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep one's self unspotted from the world."

With what we call the benevolent Societies of the day, you are all acquainted. These are so many auxiliaries of the church. And in connection with these, it is indispensable to your usefulness, that you read the religious periodical literature, especially of your own denomination, of the age in which you live. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion. Without a knowledge of the wants of the world, and what is doing to supply them, you cannot fulfill your high destiny as christians, nor meet the demands of the age in which you live. We hold it to be the duty of every man to acquaint himself with the history of his own denomination and the wants of the world. It is the active, the enlightened, the beneficent christian, who will, in the last day, hear the plaudit, "Well done good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN RELATION TO MAN:

Contemplated in a sermon, by the late REV. ELLIOTT ESTES, of South Carolina.

“Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”—Rom. ix: 14-18.

The condition of fallen man is truly lamentable. For his present aversion to the will of God is as real and obvious, as his future retribution is fearful and certain. Of this aversion to the divine will, the conduct of all men, in regard to the *holy law*, and no less to the *gospel of peace*, presents abundant evidence. Of the one, therefore, it is said truly, *they have made void thy law*; and of the other, *they made light of it and went their ways*. It is clear, then, that in man, there is nothing to encourage, for a moment, the hope of his future happiness. But the Lord hath said, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. And this is the foundation of our hopes. Here is an assurance that cannot fail. We learn, however, both from providence and revelation, that God is the *moral Governor*, as well as the *absolute Sovereign*, of the universe. And shall we conclude hence, that there is unrighteousness with him? God forbid. Who can question the propriety of his conduct, in condemning and punishing those who love darkness rather than light; and, regardless of his word, add sin to sin? And who will deny that he may not, in perfect righteousness, renew transgressors, many or few, in the spirit of their minds, and cause them to walk in newness of life? The Judge of all the earth does right then, it appears, when, as our moral governor, he punishes according to his law. His conduct,

too, is at least as free from just censure, when, in his merciful sovereignty, he quickens and makes obedient to his word those who were dead in trespasses and sins. In the one, he is the righteous law-giver; in the other, he is the omnipotent Saviour. As our Ruler, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne—as our Saviour, *free grace*, alone, actuates him in all he does. Men are slow to admit, however, that our progress will *certainly* be onward to remediless ruin, unless God exert, in our behalf, his gracious sovereignty. They imagine, after all that God has said of the *enmity of the carnal mind against him*, and their *love of darkness* which proves it, that they are not so deeply and entirely depraved. Exhibitions of sovereign grace are, consequently, generally unwelcome. But there is no other scheme upon which we may reasonably cherish the hope, that Christ shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; that the heathen shall be given to him, and the uttermost parts of the earth be his possession; or, that *one sinner* will be ultimately saved.

From the text may be fairly deduced the following propositions:—

I. That in his control of accountable beings, God proceeds righteously, as our moral Governor and gracious Sovereign.

II. That our hopes of mercy and compassion have, in reality, no other foundation.

Before the birth of Jacob and Esau, Rebecca was distinctly informed that the purposes of God respecting them were widely different. And that his designs in relation to them were eternal, is very evident. Now, the same may be said of every human being. For his vast creation is but the production of God's eternal designs. And if his intentions, in regard to man, were universally pleasing, no objection would be made against their eternal existence.

I. That there is no unrighteousness with God in his eternal purpose concerning the different and final states of men, will be sufficiently apparent, it is thought, from a few considerations.

1. His eternal purpose, in regard to his works, displays pre-eminently his own glory. He must be wonderful in counsel truly, and excellent in working, who accomplishes, his own purposes. And in strict accordance with this rule,

may be plainly shown, does God proceed in all his operations. For "whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas and all deep places;" and the incomparable dignity and glory of his name appears chiefly in his wise and fixed purpose concerning his works. "I am God," says he, "and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." His adorable perfections, not only made it just and proper that his will in all things should be settled and determined before the world began, but did certainly require it. That he did accordingly decree all that he has done, is now doing, or ever will do, cannot be fairly denied. And what appearance of unrighteousness is there in this well ordered and extensive scheme? An objector, it is presumed, would answer, Because it makes the salvation of some persons certain, and the damnation of others inevitable. And this objection, with all its importance, will vanish, it is believed, when the truth of the matter is clearly understood. The final condition of men will doubtless be as God has determined; but that his determination is, therefore, unrighteous, does not necessarily follow. On the contrary, if his determination be founded upon principles of consummate purity, nothing so fully proves his eternal independence and supremacy. The purpose of God then, in favor of his people, evinces simply his perfect freedom and holiness. It was entirely his own, and had especial regard to their sanctity and felicity. His purpose, too, respecting *the rest*, is equally free in its origin and holy in its nature. It was plainly the decision of his own perfect mind, and included only those who live and die enemies to God. And the great objection to his holy purposes after all, seems to be that God accordingly maintains his proper independence. Now, it is easily seen, that if God can, with entire consistency, determine to wash some from their sins and save them, he may as consistently determine not to purify others, and punish them for their offences. Strict justice indicates the perfect freedom and supremacy of God, at least as promptly as the rights and interests of his creatures. To do as he *pleases* is, therefore, the prerogative of God in the great affair in question, as well as all others.

2. These decrees were made under the influence of *ade-*

quate motives. The endless happiness of that great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, was an object certainly of the gracious purpose by which it was secured. And intimately connected with that, was the filial devotion and obedience of the saints. Nor was there any assurance, or even a gleam of hope, that man would ever be either happy or holy, after the fall, without such a decree. That this self-abasing truth is offensive to the unsubdued and proud heart of the sinner, is at once an evidence of its validity. The just punishment also, which God will ultimately inflict upon the disobedient and the unholy, was an object of too much importance to remain, in any respect, undetermined. But to have settled unalterably, neither the condition of the just nor the unjust, would have indicated at least some indifference to an infinite concern or some absence of qualification to adjust it perfectly.

3. These purposes were formed with *perfect knowledge* of all things, in time and eternity. And he does this, too, with perfect discrimination. The sinner, therefore, polluted and helpless, and deeply conscious, too, that life is more than he merits, and peace more than he can claim, may humbly hope in that exercise of mercy which is at once independent and free, neither obtained by merit nor withheld for the want of it. He may seek it earnestly, for upon guilty sinners it is freely bestowed. Upon these main-springs of action, then, does the divine determination, properly understood, make an impression, in the highest degree subservient to the safety and felicity of man.

II. That our hopes of mercy and compassion have in reality no other foundation, comes, secondly, to be considered. Mercy, according to this position, is the proper consequence of a divine determination. The will of God alone, is the efficient cause. Of the fitness, then, of such a conclusion, there will, after an impartial examination, appear no ground to doubt. For upon what do the guilty build their hopes of pardon? If there be no *sure* foundation, hope, of course, must be vain. And that many cherish hopes that must certainly prove fallacious, adds seriousness to this important inquiry. Upon what, then, does the hope of pardon rest? How does it come? The text asserts, *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of*

God that sheweth mercy. That it is not obtained by man, therefore, is fully decided. It is a boon ascribable to neither his *will*, nor his efforts. "For the preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." God indeed is rich in mercy to all that call upon him; but the carnal mind is enmity against him. He waits to be gracious, but the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. The bread of God, which came down from heaven, is evidently set forth without money and without price; but sinners refuse to partake. They have forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water; and still have no disposition to return to him. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." And although there are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. That he will accordingly have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, the scriptures uniformly show. But sinners not unfrequently, from the exhibition of the divine determination in regard to man, are ready to conclude, Then some will be saved, let them live as they may; and others will be lost, let them do what they will. But the truth is, the people of God will, according to his counsel, be holy and without blame before him in love. For grace reigns through *righteousness* unto eternal life; and forever excludes boasting. Nor is it *true* that the determination of God is unfavorable to *any* who seek him while he may be found, or call upon him while he is near. To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. And blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. But in his objection to the divine determination, the meaning of the sinner is, that, regardless of his cries and tears, it shuts against him the door of mercy forever. His objection, however, is palpably groundless. For he does not seek to enter in. He does not hunger or thirst after righteousness. Nor will he do either, unless God, in accordance with the eternal determination of his own will, give him *a new heart* and put within him a new spirit. That his will and his desires are perfectly free, he cannot deny. And he that sins willingly, can certainly offer no good reason that the reward of his hands should not be given him. Sin,

therefore, the love and practice of which, nothing but sovereign grace can subdue, and not the divine determination, is the cause of endless pain. Nor can that determination, in its most awful aspects, be wrong or oppressive, unless it be wrong in God to determine to do right. For that men should sin as they do, with impunity, is wholly inadmissible. But the righteous determination of God to punish for sin, in every case, is not more certain than that all are guilty, and all liable. How then, may a sinner be delivered? Upon what foundation does he venture to hope? Upon the will of his Judge, unquestionably. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me," saith the Lord, "is thine help." He, therefore, who wields the flaming sword of justice, extends also the golden sceptre of mercy. He who has the keys of hell and of death, says to whom he will, Live forever. He pardons without respect to worth or works. But let none conclude hence, that the will of God is determined in any case, without an adequate reason. He never punishes arbitrarily, nor does he pardon indiscriminately. His decision in either way is, in every instance, equally justifiable. For in regard to the unhappy, wilful sin is plainly the ground upon which he decides. And upon others, he has compassion solely in consideration of the full and complete expiation made for their sins. Justice, therefore, is no less conspicuous in the mercy than in the wrath of God. For that expiation was made by Jesus Christ, "that he might bring us to God." He is, consequently, just, and yet the justifier of those who believe in Jesus, because he was delivered for their offences. But there is salvation in none other. And without respect to what he has done in behalf of, and in stead of his people, the forgiveness of sins has been, is now, and will be, forever unknown. This provision, too, for the exercise of mercy and compassion in consistency with the perfect character of God, was of his own devising. That it was eternal is evident; and that it was made with a proper regard to the purpose of God is manifest. Wherefore the conclusion is obvious, that as there is no provision made for it, so there is, in reality, no hope of mercy but in strict conformity with the divine purpose. Christ truly gave his life a ransom for many, but it is equally certain that he was delivered by the *determinate counsel* and foreknowledge of God. "In

whom also we have obtained an inheritance," says an apostle, "being predestinated according to the *purpose* of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The eternal purpose of God, therefore, discovers the only foundation upon which a sinner may hope, having a respect, doubtless, to the objects of mercy, and to the grounds upon which it is exercised. Vain and presumptuous, then, must be the scheme of salvation in which the perfect will of God is not distinctly recognized. It is indeed independent and absolute; nor would his own glory, or the best interests of man be otherwise secure. That it will ever fail or be changed in any case, is utterly impossible. It may excite fear for which there is no remedy but the blood of atonement; and that it is fraught with consolation, the experience of the humble invariably proves. By whom, then, may the purpose of God be reasonably opposed? Not by the impenitent, surely, who deserve in justice all that they fear from its holy nature. Nor by the penitent, to whom it opens the fountain of life; nor by the faithful christian either, whose prayers and efforts it crowns with success. But after all, it is offensive, because it makes a great difference in the final circumstances of man. That such a difference is justified by the conduct of men, however, is sufficiently manifest. But that God should determine to make this difference when he knew perfectly that human nature universally would become liable to punishment, is, with many, objectionable. And this plainly impugns the independence of God. He displays his grace truly, according to his will, and men in too many instances are offended because it is free. He is not, according to this objection, perfectly at liberty. He must, because he foresees the depravity of all, redeem the whole; or be deemed partial and tyrannical. Grace, in fine, must supersede justice. Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. And this work shall be accomplished. The foundation is laid; the superstructure is rising. It will not embody the whole family of man; but in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. And they shall come

from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. His design is perfect, and its execution shall be complete. Many, indeed, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. None are excluded, however, who fear God and work righteousness. "In my Father's house are many mansions. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be." But the disobedient must depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. The tree of life is effectually guarded, but its fruit is dispensed, according to promise. Israel, therefore, shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. For in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. There is then, no deficiency in the scheme of salvation. The provisions are ample, the dispensation consistent. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry and will save them. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But for those who do not feel poor and needy, who neither thirst nor desire, nor fear, nor call upon the name of the Lord, there are no such assurances. But the elect shall be saved. He who was made an offering for sin, shall see his seed; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. For he was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is the Lord's doing: it is indeed marvelous in our eyes. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

The practical part of religion includes the operations of the mind as well as the external acts. The doctrine of election as held by Calvinists, is sustained by the experience of every christian; we at least have never known an exception. Put these two thoughts together, and we have a beautiful practical illustration, and a strong practical proof, of the doctrines advocated in the foregoing sermon, by the late beloved brother, Rev. E. Estes. We never knew an Arminian who did not abandon his own theory as soon as he fell upon his knees. Prayer speaks the language of the heart much more clearly than argument does. When we get there, we see and feel our utter helplessness and dependence upon God, not only for power, but for disposition to do, or say, or think any thing good. We there acknowledge that if we differ from others, to our advantage and their detriment, it is grace that has made us differ. ED.

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REGARD FOR THE POOR.

Not only is Christianity different from all other systems the world has ever seen, in law, philosophy, morals and religion; but in all its principles, regulations, maxims and opinions, it is superior to them all, and *opposed* to them all.

Take for example, the regard it inculcates towards the poor. In every age, all mankind have not only looked upon poverty as a calamity, but upon the poor themselves as pitiable, and the rich as honorable, from the very circumstances of their condition. The poor man himself does homage to wealth by despising poverty. But Christ *chose* to be poor, and his Father *chose* it for him. When the palace and the manger were *alike* at his option, he *preferred* the manger. And his representatives on earth now *are* the poor. He says so. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these, the least of my disciples, ye have done it *unto me*." A cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, is a cup of cold water to the glorious Messiah himself. Charity in the popular sense, is the exposition of the phrase "good works" in the scriptural sense. ED.

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## THE EXPEDIENCY OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION:

A Sermon by REV. ROBERT W. CUSHMAN, D. D., of Washington City, D. C.

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*"I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you.—JOHN XVI: 7.*

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Of all the diversified scenes of life, that is the most impressive which meets our view when called into the curtained and silent chamber of death to take the last survey of animated endearment and to reciprocate the last grasp of long continued affection; when, in immediate prospect of death, the man who is the protection, the honor and the staff of his family, calls around his bedside his loved and loving children, to receive his dying benediction and counsel. Oh, how every word that sounds of parting, swells and agitates the bursting heart! How every sentence, every word which struggles from his faltering lips, sinks as lead into the depths of the soul. Every expression fixes itself on the memory as indelibly as does the loved countenance which is now sinking before them into its kindred dust.

And what consideration can the dying man present to stay this tide of sorrow? If he assures his weeping family that he will not leave them comfortless, how will he make his promise good? Can he confer on them the blessing of a friend in their orphanage like himself? Can he give them another father?

It was an hour never to be forgotten when Jesus, the protector and friend of the little band of disciples, blessed his

Father's bounty and gave them, saying, "this is my body broken for you;" the evening when the paltry reward of treachery effected his apprehension, and when he sat as in view of the altar of his immolation and began to fortify them for the dreadful catastrophe, by pointing their grief-stricken spirits to the home of the faithful in the land where sorrows are unknown. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." Here was consolation which no dying Father was ever able to give: "*I will come again to you.*"

Although the disciples were undoubtedly convinced of the power of Christ to fulfil his promise, still they had been so long with him, they had been so accustomed to confide in his wisdom and rely on his protection, to do as he commanded, and to follow where he led, that they could not but fear that, if he should leave them, they would be like sheep scattered on their mountains without shepherd, to famish without sustenance, and to perish without shelter.

The Redeemer, however, while he told them that he was about to leave them, and that if men had persecuted him they would also persecute them, and cast them out of their synagogues; that they should be hated of all men for his name sake; and that whosoever even slew them would think he was doing God service; assured them also that he would not leave them comfortless. He not only promised to *return*, thereby removing the sad reflection excited in all other death partings, by the mournful word *farewell*, but that for his temporary absence, they should be compensated with the company of One, whom, for the instruction and consolation he should impart, he emphatically styled the *Comforter*.

"I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

"It is *expedient* for you." That is, it is profitable to you; and, on the whole, desirable. My departure will be productive of a greater amount of good to you, than my continuance with you.

"It is expedient for you that *I go away.*" The place of



his destination was the abode of his Father. "Go," said he to the joyful Mary, after his resurrection, "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and to your Father; to my God and to your God."

The doctrine of our text is, *the expediency of Christ's ascension.*

The manner in which we shall elucidate it, will be by considering and comparing the advantages and disadvantages which would have attended his continuance and the prosecution of his mediatorial designs, *on earth*, after his resurrection from the dead.

The character of Christ, while in the vestments of mortality, was that of a subject of the law of God. In death, it was that of a vicarious sacrifice; in his resurrection, that of a Justifier; and subsequently, that of a Mediator. In the character of Mediator, his work was to reconcile the world unto God. For the successful accomplishment of that arduous enterprise, he was qualified only by the unblemished life which he led as a subject of the law of God, and by the satisfaction he rendered to the justice of God in the suffering of death.

Therefore, although we do not see any insurmountable impediment to the accomplishment of his mediatorial purposes *on earth after his resurrection*, we do see an impossibility *before his death*.

It will, then, be seen, that a compliance with the wish of his disciples for his continuance on earth, was compatible only with his glorified state—with his mortal clad in immortality.

On this supposition, one of two things must have taken place. Either he must have maintained a uniform visibility and natural locality as before his death; or he must have exercised a supernatural power of temporary invisibility and instantaneous transposition as after his resurrection.

Now, as to the advantage which would have resulted from the continuance of the Saviour on earth:—His followers would, indeed, in that case, sometimes enjoy the privilege of beholding him face to face, and of discarding the grace of faith in the feast of natural vision. They would sometimes enjoy the long wished for, and long looked for, fulfillment of his promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"

by the glorious revealment of his bodily presence. They would, then, indeed, have the ineffable delight of beholding, embracing and conversing with their Lord. And while he would address them, for the removal of all their fears and doubts, in the language employed to Thomas: Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see me; their mingling gratitude and rapture might rise till they would be ready to exclaim: This is none other than the temple of God and the gate to heaven! Yet, after a few fleeting, precious moments, they would be left to meditate on a vanished and absent Saviour for a long and painful interval of years, perhaps, while distant portions of the earth were gladdened with his visitations.

But what, my brethren, what would be these visits and these favors, few and far between as they must have been, when compared with the blessing of a constant presence, which, as the consequence of his ascension you now enjoy? Under the present arrangement of the divine economy, your interviews need not be regulated by times and places; but having been raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, you may converse with a present Redeemer by day and by night; in the great congregation, or in the secret retirement of the closet; in the solitude of the desert, or amid the hurrying avocations and the bustling crowds of the city.

It is true, these eyes which are now lifted to this sacred desk, have never gazed on that lovely form that was cradled in the manger and that bled on the cross. Yet, *him having not seen ye love, and in him, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* This is no reverie of enthusiasm. We appeal to your own experience, christian brethren, whether you have not often felt, while engaged in the services of his worship, that he was verily in your midst; and that the nearest human being was more distant than the object of your most fervent and most exalted affections?

It is, however, a cheering thought, that a brighter day is before us, when faith shall be changed into vision, without a cloud or veil between, and forever exempt from interruption.

The work of the Mediator, as we have already intimated, is the reconciliation of the world to God. And the reconciliation of the world is the accomplishment of its salvation.

Salvation is inseparably connected with faith: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Faith may be created either by a divine enforcement of truth on the mind; or by the appeal of facts to the natural senses. It was by the latter that christianity was established; it is by the former that it is extended.

But as the expediency of his departure is expressly based on the fact, that the Holy Spirit would not be given in the event of his continuance on earth, the universal extension of the christian faith must have been effected solely by a perpetuity of external evidence; or, in other words, by constant miraculous demonstration.

We know not that it would have much affected the success of the gospel, whether this demonstration had consisted in the continuation of those miracles which at first authenticated it; such as healing the sick, the lame and blind, the raising of the dead, and the control of the elements; or whether it consisted in the notoriety of the simple fact, that while the period of human life was limited to a *few years*, the Messiah survived, without decay, the expiration of successive centuries: connected with the history of his resurrection from the dead, and accompanied with some sufficient evidence of his identity.

It will, then, be correct to take the history of his ministry as an index of what would have been his success in the advancement of his cause, independent of the ministrations of the Spirit.

Now, from scripture declarations, and scripture record of facts, it is clear, that miraculous evidence is not universally efficient in producing a settled conviction of the truth. "Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your day, a work in which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare (or prove) it unto you."

During our Saviour's personal ministry, there were many on whom the most incontestible evidence of his Messiahship had no other effect than to strengthen their enmity against him. While some, indeed, believed on him as they beheld the wonders of his power, others were indulging their skepticism in the contemptuous query, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" and others still were confirmed in their unbelief amid the hosannas of the dumb, amid the gazings of the blind, amid the listenings of the deaf to his



instructions; and in the presence of the hartlike agility, the ecstatic gambols of the lame, the steps, the looks, and the voices of the shrouded dead; by the pitiful and slanderous allegation of a breach of the Sabbath and of humble parentage! And thus was it seen, that miracles *alone* would be so far from effecting the conversion of the world, that it would be quite beyond their influence to prevent open hostilities to the christian cause.

The miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, after having been four days in the tomb, seemed adapted to set all incredibility at defiance. And yet this very miracle occasioned a council for the destruction both of its subject and its author. And where was the *apostle*—what was his name—that did not present a miracle as the testimonial of his apostleship—and who was the apostle that did not suffer death or banishment for his fidelity?

The hostility of the human heart seems to rise in proportion to the approach of divine power. In the Revelation, the wicked are represented as cursing their God and their King, amid the most awful displays of divine power; and looking upward, as if in defiance, and as if breathing the wish that they could hurl the Thunderer from his throne. But if Christ were on earth, this enmity would have a definite and hopeful aim. The spot where he was known to be, would become the rallying point of his foes: who, disappointed of their purpose, as of necessity they would be, would wreak their vengeance on every object which exhibited a vestige of attachment to his cause. While, in the Roman empire, the christian religion was proved divine by the most incontestible evidence of miraculous agency; by the unexampled rapidity with which it spread through every country, every city, and every class of the community, till the standard of the cross waved in triumph over the imperial palace, and the son of David was acknowledged “the blessed and only potentate” in the court of Constantine; and while idolatry saw her temples deserted, and her priesthood everywhere retiring in confusion from her famished altars; the apostate Julian was preparing, beneath the cloudless rays of the “Dayspring from on high,” to re-light those altars with the very fire which, in a christian education, he had received from heaven. And all this, not from want of demonstration of the truth of christianity, but from want of



the application of that truth, by the Holy Spirit, to the heart. The man who, in all the blaze of evidence which surrounded him, could meditate the extinction of the christian name, and in the agonies of death, could throw the blood which was gushing from his own veins towards heaven exclaiming, "O Gallilean, thou hast conquered me!" had the Redeemer been on earth, would have thrown that blood in his face; and at his heart, the spear by which it was drawn.

It would appear, then, a matter of expediency—nay, a matter of necessity, that some more successful method of conquest should be adopted: that the bodily presence of Christ should be withdrawn; and that an invisible and all-conquering agency should succeed. But this expediency is manifest not only on the ground of *ultimate*, but also of *speedy* success.

After Christ had exercised his ministry for the space of three years, there were but few, very few, perhaps not more than five hundred, who were walking in obedience to his gospel, and were ready to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him; whereas, in *one day*, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, there were three thousand souls so wrought on by his own method of operation, as to cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and who, as they were commanded, repented and were baptized, and continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And not only on the day of pentecost, but daily, by the preaching of the apostles accompanied by this power from on high, multitudes of such as should be saved were added to the church. Under the agency of this invisible power, the men who could brave a miracle unmoved, and who were probably familiar with the long and diversified catalogue of the mighty deeds of the Son of God; and who, after all, had the hardihood to join in the cry of, "Crucify him, crucify him," and imbrue their hands in his blood, were now obliged to bend their oaken necks low at the foot of the cross; and cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" It was but a few years after the Holy Spirit was given, before the Saviour's name was known and revered, and his precepts obeyed by tens of thousands, not only in Judea, but in Samaria, in Galilee, in Syria, in Ethiopia, in Cyprus, in Asia,

and in almost every province of the Roman empire. Had Christ himself continued on earth, and prosecuted, *in person*, the grand design of bringing all things into subjection to himself without the Spirit's aid, he could not, although he had called the winds for his transports, have accomplished with such celerity the captivity of mankind unto obedience to himself—even admitting the possibility of such manifestations of his amiable and glorious character as would have assured him, ultimately, complete success.

Our remarks hitherto, have had reference to Christ's departure and the succession of the Spirit, in a *general view*. But the text calls our attention to the advantage resulting to the apostles in particular: "It is expedient *for you*."

It was the pleasure of Infinite Wisdom to employ, in the accomplishment of his purposes of salvation, the agency of feeble man. The overtures of mercy, the proclamations of pardon and peace to the penitent, and the denunciation of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord on the finally incorrigible, were to be sounded from human tongues.

In accordance with this design the Redeemer sent forth his disciples to preach the kingdom of God. They went; they preached; they returned with joy; saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

But, although they could tell of unhappy sufferers delivered from the indwelling of deemons, they brought no tidings of souls emancipated from the thralldom of sin, and translated into the liberty of the children of God: *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given* to make the word spoken by them *quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*; and breaking like a hammer, and melting like a fire.\*

Perilous was the work to which Christ had called them; and it demanded an unremitting activity, and an undaunted perseverance. These were requisites which the apostles were far from possessing. We find the boldest of them, in the trying hour of their Master's apprehension, at first, in a momentary flash of courage, outraging the principles of his gospel: and then, through fear, denying all knowledge of him.

\* Jeremiah xxiii: 29.

To rectify this defect of their natures, the Holy Spirit was promised; and after Christ's ascension given. "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings, for my sake, for a testimony against them and the gentiles. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you."

After they had been prepared for their work by that divine unction, they stood undaunted in the presence of monarchs, and chains, and prisons. And the same disciple who had been guilty of such base cowardice on the evening of his Master's apprehension, was now prepared to confront his murderers, and fearlessly charge them with the guilt of his death. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. *Him* hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses, and made him both Lord and Christ." This faithful testimony, applied by the Spirit which inspired him, was the means of the conversion of about three thousand souls.

Another advantage accruing to the disciples, from the exchange spoken of in our passage, was the illumination of their minds, and their instruction in the whole system of christian truth. The human mind is slow in the apprehension of truths of an abstract and spiritual nature. Indeed, it is intimated that its unaided efforts would fail entirely to apprehend them. "I have many things, said the Redeemer, to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever things he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

Another advantage of Christ's ascension and the Spirit's descent, and one which the christian alone knows how to appreciate, and one which was by no means peculiar to the primitive christian, was, the Spirit's aid in successful supplication.

The disciples were filled with indignation at the imperti-



nence of the request made by a parent on behalf of two of their number. But they forgot, perhaps, that they were indebted to their Master for preservation from the same impertinence. They had once felt their inability to order their speech before God, and had besought their Lord to teach them how to pray.

To this important privilege and duty, they were rendered fully competent only by the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit," says the apostle, "helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

It is this benefit to which the appellation *Comforter*, in our text, particularly refers. In its original import, it designates one who asks; who prays.

Here, then, my brethren, in the present arrangement of the gospel economy, we have a two-fold blessing. Christ, though departed, is still our Saviour. At the right hand of the Majesty on high, he ever lives to make intercession for us; as fervent, as effectual, as that in the presence of his disciples, when he prayed: "Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are one." And beyond all this, we have, as our companion and friend, an instructor and guide in our pilgrimage to glory, the Spirit of wisdom, supplication and grace.

But there is yet one other consideration of two much importance to be passed unobserved.

We presume you have all known, from your own experience, that *Where the treasure is, there the heart will be also*. Whatever is most loved, is most frequently the subject of our meditations. The soul of the miser is encased in the coffers of his silver and gold. Wherever the husband and the parent is, his thoughts are oftenest lingering in the loved spot which contains the most loved objects of his affection. The stranger Swiss, as he walks our streets, heeds not the beauty, the gaiety and the magnificence which surround him, for his soul is beyond the Atlantic, ranging among his native Alps, or reposing in the cottage where his childhood and his youth received a father's protection and a mother's love.



But the affection which a man, to be a christian, must bear to his Saviour, must, and will exceed that which he bears to possessions, parents, or friends. It is not too much, then, to expect that his thoughts should very frequently turn from all other things and from all creatures to *Him*; and find their elevation in the degree of dignity in which he may dwell.

Now, if such had been the divine economy that the Redeemer had continued to the end of the world, to prosecute his mediatorial work on earth; the affection which his followers would have borne for him, would have been stamped with a character of worldliness, by which it would have been nearly allied to admiration and patriotism: elevated and differing from them only in proportion to the dignity and holiness distinguishing Him from the objects of admiration and esteem among men.

But as he is now exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and as the Father hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be Head over all things to the church, the christian, *now*, in meditating on his Lord, raises his thoughts *above* all that is earthly, all that is frail, all that is imperfect; to all that is grand, and glorious, and spotless, and holy: and *by beholding, he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*—Amen.

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#### NOTE TO DR. CUSHMAN'S SERMON.

We are under great obligation to our long esteemed and much loved friend, Dr. Cushman, for the foregoing eloquent discourse. And in this tribute of acknowledgment, we know we shall meet a hearty response in the feelings of our readers. And we are the more gratified, because the subject is one which, although of exceeding interest, scarcely ever finds an allusion. It is, however, one to which our own thoughts have lately been directed with unwonted interest; notwithstanding, we have in the meantime been oppressed with most unusual cares and labors. Possibly, however, this seeming impediment may have been a real auxiliary to our reflections.

Everything in the Bible, especially in the history and instructions of our Lord himself, is of absorbing interest. And one reason why we do not discover more of its glory and beauty is, that we do not pay the requisite attention. We, however, acknowledge here, and we do it with pleasure, that one cause of our late unusual attention to this subject, has been the perusal of an elaborate treatise by our old friend and fellow-laborer, Dr. Howell, of Nashville, Tennessee, entitled "The way of Salvation." It appeared to us, that the treatise in question discusses many subjects which, although correlative, are not absolutely necessary to the investigation, and which, in fact, might have been omitted with as much propriety as many others are; while it passes over some others which would have contributed to the design of that distinguished author.

The phrase "the way of salvation" may mean either of two things. It may mean God's method of saving; or it may mean the course taken and pursued to the end by those who are saved. It is in the latter sense of the phrase, that we were prepared, from the title of the treatise, to expect a discussion with ample and explicit directions. We still need a tract on this very subject, and hope it will be given to the public either by Dr. Howell or some other competent guide. These remarks have a direct bearing on the subject matter of Dr. Cushman's discourse.

God's method of salvation is one of the senses we give to the phrase "the way of salvation." God has never proposed to mankind but two ways of being saved: one is by *obedience to law*—the other is by *belief in the Messiah*. And it is a very solemn thought—a thought full of momentous meaning—that the whole human race—that every human being—to whom either of these methods has ever been propounded, has deliberately and decidedly rejected it. They are but two different phases of the same depravity of heart—a violation of the law, and a disbelief of the gospel; but they both exist, and they have been universal, including all men, in every age, to whom the authority or the grace of Jehovah has ever been addressed.

It seems to be a broad and sweeping assertion, that all men, in all ages, have concurred in rejecting both the law and the gospel, wherever they or either of them, have proposed themselves as means of salvation. But either this doctrine

is true, or it is true, that mankind are not utterly and totally depraved. If this doctrine be surrendered, away go with it, efficacious grace in regeneration, and in a word, all the doctrines comprehended by the old divines, under the title, "Doctrines of Grace." These we consider vital to christianity; nor can we see in what this form of infidelity differs from that which is open and avowed, except that it is covert, and therefore the more to be dreaded. Infidelity assumes one of two forms. Either it undisguisedly denounces or professes doubt to the truth of divine Revelation; or admitting its truth, denies every doctrine vital to its existence. This latter is the worse form of the two; inasmuch as it disarms opposition, and makes religion the destroyer of itself. This has been the source of Unitarianism, Arianism, Socinianism, and every system of heresy destructive of vital godliness. Assuming the truth of these propositions, it follows that those saved before the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, commencing with pentecost, whether before or in the time of the Messiah's personal presence, were renewed in the spirit of their minds, and prepared for heaven by the same sovereign and efficacious grace which produces those saving effects now.

We anticipate here an objection to what we are saying. But we are provided with the reply. It will be asked, "Do you mean to say, that both the *law* and the *gospel* proved to be failures, and that God, in order to save his own people, was driven to the necessity of *providing another expedient*?" In one sense it was even so. But in another, we must consider the subject as a *whole*. God has never been disappointed in any of his plans. He knew from the beginning the effects of the promulgation of his law; and he knew from the beginning the effects of the proclamation of the terms of peace, by the lips of his own Son. And he of course knew beforehand, that the dispensation of the Spirit would be necessary to supervene before all things would be brought in submission to the authority of Christ.

There is, then, just here, another distinction of some importance to be made. It is, that the methods by which God has, under different dispensations *proposed* to save men—one by *obedience* and the other by *faith*—are not the methods by which he *does* save them. This latter, the method by which he *does* save them, involves the whole of



his dealings towards his creatures in every dispensation, and, in a word, his entire plan of Providence and Grace, from the creation to the end of time. And it moreover includes the additional idea, one of great moment to a proper comprehension of the subject, that in every individual case of personal salvation, from Adam down to the day of pentecost, the individual was renewed in the spirit of his mind, and saved by the same supernatural and divine agency. True, the saved, both believe and obey, but it is not by their own uninfluenced submission to his proposals, but by his taking the case absolutely, and certainly, in his own hands, and working conviction, renewal, consecration, perseverance, and entire deliverance, wherever his own gracious and effectual Sovereignty chooses. In other words, it is under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to the ascension of the Lord Jesus to heaven, that the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord; and it is under this dispensation, the preceding being made instrumental and subservient thereto, that God, of his infinite mercy, brings about the salvation of his own elect.

This discourse will be found to be eminently suggestive. It leads the reader to new fields of thought and reflection. And if we are not mistaken, almost any christian will be amazed when he looks at our Lord's own remarks on this subject, from his first hint to his disciples concerning his anticipated departure, and the necessity of it down to the period of his ascension. The conviction of the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, required the presence of this subsequent agent. "*He shall convince.*" And yet this agent was to come, only in the event of his departure. And his departure involved his death, resurrection and ascension to heaven.

ED.

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#### ANECDOTE OF THE LATE REV. ANDREW BROADDUS.

Some five and twenty years ago, there were traveling from the city of Richmond, to the counties of Orange and Stafford in Virginia, on an annual summer's visit, an elderly lady and her beloved niece: the former now in heaven; the latter still living, a blessing to her family, her friends and the church. As they journeyed, late in the day of their departure, they discovered on the road side, at a little



distance in the woods, signs of a religious meeting. There were carriages, gigs, carts, wagons, horses; and soon were discovered the crowded seats and the stage. Some minister was then about to close his services, and it was evident that Mr. Broaddus, seated near him, was about to succeed him. The elderly lady anticipated a real feast; for it was generally in his own county and neighborhood that Mr. Broaddus preached his best sermons. The ladies took their seats on a plank, or perhaps on a log.

Previous to their arrival at this place, the elderly matron, of slender frame and long-continued infirmity, was well nigh broken down, by her ride from Richmond, and was scarcely able to sit up in her carriage.

At the close of the discourse now just finished, when Mr. Broaddus had risen, and had begun to speak, the young lady says to her aunt, "Aunt, it is growing late, and you are very much exhausted; had we not better proceed on our journey?" "No, my child, I am quite rested now," was the significant reply.

This simple story is full of important meaning. The lady expected a rich banquet of spiritual enjoyment, and in the expectation actually forgot her fatigue. We make but one inference.

When audiences are tired, the fault may possibly be partly in the preachers. We do not mean to say, there is no fault in the hearers. But it is the business of the preacher not to permit, if he can help it, that any auditor should be weary. No speaker has his audience so much in his power, as a minister of the gospel. They are almost entirely at his disposal. They go and place themselves before him; have no opportunity to object, or cavil, or reply; and he may, in spite of their wishes, conduct them just where he pleases. His theme is boundless. His means of illustration and enforcement are infinite. If master of what he is going to say, and prepared as to the best manner of saying it, his audience cannot be listless. Well do we recollect the first sermon we ever heard from Andrew Broaddus. It was under the most unpropitious circumstances. We had, for a quarter of a century, been in the habit of hearing him praised, and our expectations were, therefore, too high to be possibly met. Again, we had been in the habit of hearing sermons from thirty to forty-five minutes in length, but he

preached that day, one hour and a quarter. We had but lately listened to the melodious tones of the illustrious Summerfield, and others of equal talent and ability, and had made it a point, for the three years then just ended, to hear every distinguished man, from any country, and of every sect, who visited the city of Philadelphia. When Mr. Broaddus was done, so short had the time appeared, that we could not believe our watch. ED.

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#### TO READ WELL, A GREAT ATTAINMENT.

The value of reading well, orally, is illustrated in the happy effects of all who ever heard the late Rev. Andrew Broaddus read his hymns and chapters in public and social worship. We could better understand a chapter from hearing him read it, than from the most elaborate exposition of most interpreters. And as regards the hymns, they invariably seem possessed of new meaning, and new beauty, whenever we heard them from his lips.

So vivid and deep is our impression on this subject now, that our feeling is this: If Mr. Broaddus were alive, and if we resided in the same city, we should think ourselves well repaid in attendance on his meetings, if he should do nothing more than read, without preaching. Yea we would ride many miles to hear him. Alas for us! Much as we may value our friends while they are with us, we never learn their full value till they are taken away from us. Could we have one more visit from the lamented Broaddus, we would not quit his side till he was compelled to leave us. Or could we once more see the lamented Rice, we would traverse the streets with him till he left the city.

We allude to this subject, to illustrate the importance of reading well. Mr. Broaddus felt, in reading, that he must make on the minds of those who heard, the very impressions intended by the author. He had those impressions, and he communicated them. He did not learn this in the schools, nor from the Professor's chair, nor from the bar, nor from the pulpit, but by following nature herself. He was the most simple and natural man we ever saw or heard. We exhort our young men to follow the example. Do you study your hymns and chapters, as well as your discourses, before you go to the place of worship? ED.

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## THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED; THEIR DIFFERENCE:

A Sermon, by REV. ROBERT RYLAND, President of Richmond College, Richmond, Virginia.

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*"Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."*—Malachi iii: 18.

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Among the cotemporaries of the prophet Malachi, there seems to have been a disposition to confound the service of God with that of the world. They contended that in point of *character*, the wicked were as upright as the servants of God; and that in respect to *advantage*, the scale turned rather in *their* favor. "Ye have said, it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." They submitted to no sacrifices for their Maker—lost no time in his worship—imposed no restraint on their self-indulgence. The prophet, however, mentions *one distinctive mark* of the true servants of God, and one prominent *advantage* appertaining to their character. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Nay, more. Alluding to the decisions of the future, he adds: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a

man spareth his own son that serveth him." He then announces the conclusion to which all his previous remarks had tended, and to the consideration of which you are affectionately invited: "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." The subject before us is the *difference between the righteous and the wicked*.

1. In their intellectual habits.
2. In the exercise of the heart.
3. In their outward deportment.
4. In their future destiny.

I. The colors of the rainbow are so intimately blended, that it is difficult to say where one terminates and another begins. Yet the colors themselves are manifestly different. So it is in the case before us. There is a radical difference between sin and holiness; but the characters of men are graduated so variously between these extremes, that it is sometimes hard to decide to which of the two classes they respectively belong. When the merely natural man has been carefully trained by intelligent and godly parents; when his reason and his conscience have been developed by judicious education; and his manners refined by long association with the polite; and especially when his passions are held in check by deference to public opinion, and his temper naturally amiable, he approaches very near, in appearance, to a real christian. On the other hand, some sincere christians are so much under the dominion of ignorance and prejudice—so unformed in their manners—and so unlovely in their native disposition, that grace is sadly obscured and marred, if indeed charity can hope that it exists in them at all. Now, although these two classes of human character run into each other in the manner described, yet a close inspection will disclose properties peculiar to each and widely dissimilar.

There is difference not only in the conclusions formed in regard to revealed truth, but in the amount of consideration given to it by the two classes. The wicked seldom meditate on the character and government of God—on the developments of the great system of divine Providence—on the relations and responsibilities of the creature to the Creator—on the odious and destructive nature of sin—and on the



wonderful arrangements of God for its forgiveness and removal. "The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. *God is not in all his thoughts.* His ways are always grievous—thy judgments are far above out of his sight." Even those thoughts that obtrude themselves on the reluctant attention of the ungodly are vague and indefinite. Resulting from early prejudices, not carefully derived from the inspired oracles; not incorporated with the warm, approving affections of the heart, they cannot be said to illustrate the saying of the apostle "*receiving the truth in the love of it.*" They rather disturb than comfort the mind—they are, therefore, resisted more than cherished. "I remembered God and was troubled," is the most truthful confession that a man unreconciled to his Maker could utter in respect to the effect of his faith. Surely the feeblest servant of the most High is far otherwise in relation to his perception and appreciation of revealed truth. In the deep recesses of his mind he often ponders the great subjects of religion. While his hands are busied about the needful affairs of this life, his spirit wanders far off on more congenial subjects, and dives into the unfathomable mysteries of godliness. The glorious perfections of Deity—the sublime disclosures of his wisdom and love in the redemption of man by the sacrifice of Christ—the moral beauty, and fitness, and fulness of that Redeemer—the immense obligations to love and obedience that he has imposed on us by his unsolicited and unbounded love to us—these and kindred thoughts find a home in the bosom of the righteous man. They are invested with all the interest of living, present realities. He often reviews the ground of his hope and the evidences of his discipleship. He brings himself, with all his feelings, and principles, and conduct, to the divine standard of faith and morals, and passes a severe judgment on his entire character. Thus we see that if we could read the intellectual history of a righteous and a wicked man for a given period, we should discover a marked difference in their trains of thought and in all their mental habits.

II. But this diversity is still more apparent when we come to examine the affections of the heart. The gospel claims this part of our nature as the theatre for its most striking exhibitions. In all its doctrines, and facts, and motives,

and influences, it appeals through the understanding to the heart. One of its prominent teachings is, first make the tree good, and then its fruits will be good—that is, renew the heart, and the life will be holy. In accomplishing this result, the subject of it is conscious of certain exercises of mind usually called “*experience*.” I will not contend for a name—perhaps some other would do as well. I will not deny that some persons have made too much of experience, though still more have made too little of it, but I maintain that the gospel produces in the heart of all its sincere believers, *emotions peculiar to themselves* and wholly unlike those which the merely natural heart entertains. These emotions are generically the same in all cases, while they present, in each individual, some points belonging only to him. As every human face is sufficiently like all others to enable us to decide at once that it is a human face, and yet possesses some peculiarity to designate it from all others, so every christian has the general features of his family, and yet no two are in all respects absolutely equal. To specify—

1. The righteous feel a habitual, deep-seated conviction of their own unworthiness. Light has broken in on their minds and revealed the hidden corruptions of their nature. When they compare themselves with the broad and spiritual demands of the divine law; when they bring their naked souls into society with the awful and spotless Deity; when they analyze all their motives and secret springs of thought, and weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary; when they review their past lives and contrast them with all the mercies and all the forbearance which they have received: they are filled with deep self-abhorrence. And even while they enjoy a hope of pardon and acceptance, the habitual state of their minds is that of self-abasement before their God. But wicked men are comparatively at ease on this whole subject. They look on sin as a very small and a very common matter. If conscience whispers guilt to their souls, her voice is unheeded or silenced. They remain wrapped up in the mantle of indifference or self-complacency, and when their composure is disturbed, they labor to excuse themselves—to extenuate their faults and thus to evade the convincing power of the law.

2. The righteous cherish a vivid, a realizing, an appropriating trust in the merits of the Saviour. Faith with

them is not merely an intellectual process—a deduction logically drawn from admitted premises—but a cordial submission to the authority of Christ; an acquiescence in the entire system of means which God has proposed for our recovery. It is a living principle of the soul which grasps the awful realities of the unseen world and brings them, as motives, to bear on the duties and trials of the present life. Now, the most that an unregenerate man can claim for himself, is that vague and inoperative belief which education may have imparted; the careless assent of the mind to truths which the heart does not admire, and which do not impel to holy obedience; a belief which does not unseal the deep fountains of feeling in the soul, and which does not bring its possessor into a state of intimate communion with God. In fact, the faith of the nominal christian consists rather in the absence of scepticism, than in the apprehension of the distinctive doctrines of the gospel.

3. The predominating desire of the godly man is to please the Master in heaven. He may occasionally lose sight of the great end of his existence. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, may, at times, obscure from his view the prize of his high calling—but, like the needle vibrating, yet finally settling to the pole—his desires will ultimately go out after God and concentrate on His glory. He feels that he belongs to Jesus Christ—that with a great price he has been redeemed from the bondage of Satan and from the pains of the second death, and that henceforth nothing short of a personal and an unreserved dedication to his service can satisfy his claims. He may not always be occupied in purely religious duties; but whatever employment engages his attention—whether sacred or secular—his design is to secure the divine approbation and promote the divine glory. He may, indeed, often come short of this high standard of piety. Still he approves and adopts this standard. He may fall into temptation and sin grievously against the commands of God; but this is rather a violation of his design, and a departure from his principles, than the legitimate execution of them. His *intention, his deliberate, honest, settled purpose is, to do his duty*—to avoid whatever is unjust to man and offensive to God—and to attempt every thing that his relations to both render obligatory. *Is this your character?* The wicked,



on the contrary, are animated by desires that have but little reference to the approbation of the final Judge. "How can I advance my interests? How promote my reputation? How enlarge my estate? How provide for my family?" These are the great absorbing inquiries of the carnal mind. Supreme selfishness is its besetting sin. If it rise one step higher and enter the regions of patriotism and public spiritedness, or the yet more refined atmosphere of sympathy and universal brotherhood, still it has not God for its object and its end. Why do you love your fellow-creatures? Is it because they are, like yourselves, the offspring of the Creator; and because he has required you to love them as you do yourselves? Or is it merely the impulse of your nature, not guided by principle and not dictated by a reverence of the Supreme? If the latter, whatever of amiableness you should be acknowledged to possess in regard to your fellow-man, you may not, on that account, claim a share in that righteousness which consists in allegiance to God.

4. Not to specify any farther the affections distinguishing the two classes, we observe that *generally* there is a material difference between the inward character of the two. The one is carrying on a *warfare* against sin in his members—a warfare that demands vigilance, and effort, and spiritual armour on the right hand and on the left—a warfare in which the soldier of Jesus is often so pressed by danger, as to be made to cry out in the anguish of his soul, for help from on high. The unregenerate are strangers to these inward conflicts with the powers of darkness. Being no resistance, there is no contest. They are led captive by the devil at his will, and they never feel the chains of spiritual bondage till they begin to struggle against their thralldom. The children of God experience a lively and fervent affection for each other. It is their evidence of discipleship—their bond of union—their unvarying and universal characteristic. No matter in what climate born—no matter in what dialect conversing—no matter by what mode of worship edified: all the real lovers of God find their affections excited by the discovery of the image of the Master. The unconverted either conceive a positive aversion to the people of God as such, or at most feel towards them a perfect indifference. There is no community of interests; no con-



geniality of tastes; no sympathetic chord vibrating in union between them. They consider religion a good thing—its professors, when consistent—an orderly and useful class—and if they will keep their religion to themselves, and not obtrude it on their attention, or disturb their enjoyments, they can get along quite well with them. But if the people of God rise to their true position, as the uncompromising reprovers of sin however elegant or fashionable—as the fearless witnesses of truth however cutting to mortal pride—and as the bold aggressors on the empire of darkness in every form—if they press, with earnest zeal and repeated solicitations, the claims of the gospel on the personal attention of the ungodly—pulling them out of the fire—alas! how quickly will decided opposition betray the secret enmity of the carnal mind! Brethren of the church, why do not wicked men still oppose, and persecute, and hate you? Has the spirit of the world changed? No. Are sin and holiness less repugnant to each other now than in the primitive ages of the church? No. Has Satan lost any of his malignity, any of his cunning, any of his activity against the truth? No. Why then do these two great parties keep up so little agitation? I answer, *the lines are drawn too faintly between them.* The church is too much like the world in its spirit—its maxims—its general bearing. There is not holiness enough in the church; not zeal enough to evoke opposition. It was not thus at the beginning. Hence said the Saviour: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” And as certainly as the church shall shake herself from the dust and gird herself for the combat in good earnest with the world, the flesh and the devil, will this hatred be again revealed. There is to be yet a great conflict on the earth between the powers of darkness and of light.

III. It is true, however, that defective as is christian deportment, and low as is the standard of excellence in the church, there is still a visible and palpable difference in conduct between the great mass of the godly and of the ungodly. Take human nature as it is, and the belief of the leading truths of the Bible—the public profession of those truths and the social and solemn acts of worship incident to

such a profession, cannot fail to restrain human passions, and to elevate human character above its original level. If then individual cases of religious profession occur, without any amendment in behavior—if men are not made *substantially better* by their adhesion to christianity, no argument, however elaborate, no pretext, however plausible, can shield them from the charge of deliberate and studied hypocrisy. That the deportment of professing christians is more upright than that of others in general, is evinced from the fact, that when they commit any gross outrage, it occasions more surprise than when the same is done by men of the world. This shows not only the purity of the principles by which they profess to be governed, but the comparative unfrequency of the event which awakens surprise.

The great enterprises of benevolence by which the moral condition of the world is undergoing a progressive improvement, are guided and sustained by men of devoted piety. The decisions of the last day will be justified by citing the history of the parties judged: “For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” Who are building churches and traversing the waste places of the earth to preach the gospel? Who are translating, and printing, and circulating the Bible in all the languages and nations of the globe? Who are teaching the thousands and tens of thousands of children in Sunday schools the elements of sacred wisdom, and thus preparing the next generation for the responsible duties of life? Who are composing and publishing the evangelical books; the religious periodicals and tracts, that enlighten the popular mind and keep alive the public conscience? Whose example is giving tone to general morals and staying the tide of profligacy and corruption that prosperity has occasioned? I answer, the people of God. Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world, said Jesus, and unless the world is the better for your living in it—unless ye are doing something for the cause of humanity, it is evident that ye are destitute of the salt of grace and the light of life.

Turn your attention now to the prevailing habits of wicked men. They “do evil with both hands earnestly.” The prophet’s description is every where and in every age

verified: "They draw iniquity with chords of vanity and sin as it were with a cart rope." See that inebriate drowning his reason in strong drink—brutalizing himself by the most loathsome excess. See that voluptuary finding his only happiness in gratifying the mere animal propensities of his nature. See that worshiper of mammon circumventing by every artifice the unwary and the defenceless to augment his own wealth. Hear the horrid oaths and blasphemies that are uttered by ten thousand mouths every day in our land. Behold that giddy, thoughtless throng, that are whirling in the vortex of amusement and eddying their way down to the gulf of perdition. These are the sins of nominally *christian countries*. And did God make all these creatures? Did he endow them with capacities to know, and love, and obey Him? Has Jesus died to save them, and is the Bible open to instruct them? Is heaven stooping to win their affections, and hell from beneath yawning to swallow them up? And do they *know* all these things? Are these momentous truths again and again pressed on their attention? Yes, all this is so; and still they are as indifferent as if God were a waxen image, and heaven and hell, judgment and eternity, were nursery tales.

IV. The Bible is full of evidence that the destinies of men in the future state will be as *different* as are their characters in the present. The very terms "government," "law," "righteousness," "judgment," "conscience," scattered over its pages, indicate the probationary state of man here and his consequent happiness or misery hereafter. It is the unvarying law of our nature, that no society or employment can minister to our pleasure unless we have tastes adapted to it. If, then, a wicked man, with all his enmity to God, and holiness, and all his aversion to the spiritual worship of heaven, could be admitted there, it would be morally impossible for him to enjoy its felicity. How could he join the song of praise to the Redeemer without having ever been cleansed by his blood? How could he wave the palm of victory, having never entered into the war, and never fought the battle against *sin*? How could he relish the pure and spiritual food of that land, in all its variety and abundance, when the meagre foretastes of it in this world had often excited his disgust? If, then, the Bible were silent, we might be confident that no man could be re-



ceived into heaven without the pardon of his sins and a thorough renovation of his heart. But the Bible is not silent—"Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. He that believeth not shall be damned. Upon the wicked God will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. All liars and all swearers, all thieves and adulterers, all murderers and drunkards, along with the rejecters of Christ, will be shut out from heaven and will be thrust into the prison-house of hell. But the ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They will obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. They will drink of the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Let every man decide at once to which class he belongs. There is no neutral ground. He is either a child of God or a child of the devil—an heir of heaven or an heir of hell. He either loves or hates Jesus Christ. If the latter, let him rouse up from his astonishing and fatal stupidity and put forth efforts—*earnest, agonizing efforts*—to save his soul. If your life were in danger, would you be at ease? But your immortal life is in jeopardy. If your estate were likely to be lost, would you use no precaution? But your eternal inheritance is likely to be lost. If a single bone, or muscle, or nerve of your body were suffering acute pain, would you not try every remedy, and call to your aid the greatest skill? But God is able to punish, with unutterable anguish, your soul and body in hell forever. Oh! then awake to the importance of fleeing from the wrath to come. The salvation of your souls is the *the first, the great, the only true interest*. The riches, honors and pleasures of the world, are mere shadows flitting around you. From their silent graves the unnumbered dead, could they speak, would tell you what an *empty bubble the world is*. From the dark world of woe, the lost spirits, could they speak, would warn you not to *trifle with your eternal interests*. From their



calm and blissful abodes, the blessed spirits of your departed friends, your fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, who have gone home to glory, could they speak, would tell you that *heaven is worth striving for*. Like the former generations of earth, you, too, borne onward by the resistless tide of time, will soon launch into the broad and shoreless ocean of eternity. The season of prayer, and penitence, and pardon, will soon be over with you. The calls of mercy will soon die away in the distance. The love of Jesus will presently cease to be offered as a motive to awaken your gratitude and to enkindle your desires. Now he points to his bloody agonies in the garden—to his crown of thorns—to the scourge—the nails—the cross—and says, “*All this, sinner, for you.*” And will you, can you, turn away in cold disdain and say, “*I can't give up my sins?*” “They are so sweet to my taste, so pleasant to my soul, that I can't give them up for the love of Jesus and the bliss of heaven.” Then you will never enter into his kingdom. God have mercy upon you, and save you from so mad a decision and so terrible a destiny. Amen.

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NOTE TO MR. RYLAND'S SERMON.

In no other particular, perhaps, do worldly men form a more inaccurate judgment, than in the difference between themselves and christians. Each man among them, if he does not think himself as good as any believer, thinks himself better than some one of them, and that thus, as a class, there is no difference. But the decision is wholly wrong. The judgment the world forms of the church, is what each individual forms of another, which is sometimes exaggerated, sometimes false, but always wrong. No wonder. How can it be otherwise? The blind cannot distinguish colors. What traveler can institute a faithful comparison between a country he has seen and one he has not seen? He judges of the one by observation, of the other by report. And possibly the prophet has allusion to this very fact in the passage before us: “Turn ye, therefore—be converted then,” (in view of what I have just said,) “and you will see the difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

We have said that the judgment is sometimes false. This

charge is grave, but it is true: and the truth has its foundation in the acknowledged principles of human character. The worldly man is obliged to do one of two things—either he must judge unfavorably of the christian, or of himself. When of the former, whether he attaches his imputation to the man or to his religion, it is an alleviation of his own case. Many a man is made, or makes himself an infidel, by this very process. His pleasures and pursuits conflict with the gospel, and he does not choose to relinquish them. He must, therefore condemn either himself or religion. And he attacks religion obliquely through its professors. Here is a double, tripple, injustice. First, he is partial, and then unfaithful to himself, at his highest cost. Secondly, he identifies the individual with his profession. And thirdly, he treats imaginary as real faults, and then, perhaps, propagates them. Hence, much of the slander the world throws at the church.

Sometimes the judgment is an exaggeration. Christianity in its perfection is an assemblage of all virtues. It proposes to make benefactors of thieves. "Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor with his hands, working that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." But there is no christian perfect. His system is perfect; and he is aiming at perfection. It can be no argument against a pattern that it is perfect. This is its highest recommendation; yet worldlings do thus argue, when they say, "Why give us an inimitable model?" The industrious worldling, who, perhaps, has industry for his only good quality, compares himself with a lazy christian, in whom laziness is the greatest fault, and he finds himself the superior. He jumps first at the conclusion that he is as good as his neighbor; and then at the other conclusion, that worldliness is as good as religion. Or if you invert the order of this supposition, the judgment is the same as regards the parties condemned or acquitted. The lazy worldling accuses the industrious christian with being as much in love with the world as himself, and even more, because he very properly makes his worldly pursuits a part of his religion, and prosecutes them with as much earnestness as he prays or reads the Bible. In either case, and in all cases, religion suffers in the judgment of the world from the sheer unfaithfulness or incompetence of the judges.

And the worldly man is all the time utterly unconscious that he is himself partly the cause of the very imperfections of which he so loudly complains. Every man on earth, who does not submit to the authority of Jesus Christ, is throwing the whole weight of his influence against that cause which his love of his own pleasures and pursuits induces him to implead. This is as inevitable as is the passage of the electric spark from the positive to the negative side, thus producing equilibrium. The one effect is as sure in morals as the other is in physics. The church, by its contact with the world, confers great benefits upon it: but it must of necessity receive injury. Hence, every worldly man is partly the cause of the imperfection of every christian.

This sermon contains a valuable body of thought wisely arranged and well expressed, touching the difference in question, and thus offers a real service to all who read it. But especially does it commend itself to the unconverted portion of our readers. The error they commit in the judgment they form is injurious to the cause of religion. With the christian himself, it is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, if he can but obtain the approbation of the Judge of all. But the injury to the man of the world himself is fatal—is deplorable. As a labor of love calculated to reverse the judgment referred to, we welcome to our pages this discourse, and commend it to all who read.

ED.

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### RELIGION, MORAL; NOT INTELLECTUAL:

A short Sermon, by the Editor.

*"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."*—JOHN vii: 17.

The value of religion, to those to whom it is addressed, depends not upon the intellectual state or acts of the mind, but upon the moral. This is the proposition to be discussed and applied in this discourse: and it is one that merits your profoundest attention.

I make two preliminary remarks; of which also, you will see the great importance.

1. You must not confound the intrinsic value of religion, or religion itself, with its relative value, or actual advantage, to those to whom it addresses itself. Our religion is con-



tained in the gospel—and this is the same glorious system of truth, whatever may be its fate, when it claims mortal regards. Were all men to whom the glad tidings ever come, to reject them, and persist to the end in rejecting them, and finally perish, it would no more diminish the grace, wisdom, and glory of the system itself, than accidental or voluntary blindness of men would obscure the light of the sun.

2. You must be at some trouble to distinguish between what is intellectual and what is moral, whether in states of the mind, or in its acts. Simply to admit, or to deny, any fact or proposition, according as supported by real or supposed evidence or not, has no morality in it. It is an intellectual act, and requires approbation or disapprobation, to include blame or praise. To decide that a debt *is* due, is an intellectual act. To *purpose* to pay it, and to *pay* it, are moral acts that deserve approbation; to determine *not* to pay it, or carelessly to *neglect* it, is a blame-worthy moral act. If these remarks are just, there is no more virtue in simply believing that Jesus is the Christ, *if that belief be separated from the disposition of the heart with which his person and character are contemplated*, than there is in believing in the rotundity of the earth, or in the laws of gravitation. The faith the gospel requires, *works by love*.

The doctrine of our text is a key which serves to unlock many mysteries.

1. It accounts for the origin and increase of idolatry in the world. From the earliest ages, the true God revealed himself to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses—all the faithful. And you may investigate the history of idolatry as much as you choose, and you will not find any better account of it, than that which the apostle Paul gives in his epistle to the Romans: “When they knew God, they (the gentiles,) glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”—Rom. i: 21.

2. It accounts for the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish nation. It was not that the Jews had not the requisite knowledge, nor that they did not examine the records they possessed; but it was because their knowledge



was nullified by the bad state of their hearts. "Ye search the scriptures," said our Lord to them, "because in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. But ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life." The critics have said, and very properly said, that "search" is a declaration in this place, not a command; and that "ye will not come," is not expressive of a mere futurity, but of a purpose. "Ye are not willing to come." "Ye decide not to come."

3. It reconciles the moral government of God with the known and admitted powers of the human mind. If this doctrine were not true, virtue and goodness might consist in mental power and acquisition; and if so, why not in bodily shape and agility? Animals might, then, be as moral as men. The grand characteristic of man is, that he is a moral being. To make an argument, and to understand it when made, is compatible with inveterate unholiness of heart. Hence, God claims the affections, the confidence, the homage of his creatures. And the moral sense is universal in man: it is the grand essential attribute of his nature, without which he is not man.

Where would be the wisdom, goodness, or justice of God, in either rewarding or punishing creatures, except as *good* or *bad*?

4. It explains many things in scripture, otherwise inexplicable. It shows in what sense repentance precedes faith. Both imply the same state of heart: but one has for its object God, and the other Christ. "Ye repented not afterwards, that ye might believe." "If thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace," is a charge of voluntary ignorance, antithetic to the extenuation, "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

5. It is confirmed by the whole history of error and infidelity, in all ages. Error of all sorts, and of every degree, grows out of reading the scriptures with a bad heart. Pride conceals its own depravity. The soul unconscious of hell-desert, desires no atonement; charges God with injustice in the eternal punishment of the wicked; and sees no use in the preternatural influence of the Holy Spirit in order to conversion. A system of theology which does not make the atonement to religion, what the sun is to the planetary system, is not that gospel which Paul preached. Unitarian-

ism and Universalism, are worse than Mahomedanism or Idolatry: inasmuch as they suppose greater and better light. I would sooner be a Buddhist in China, than an unbeliever in Virginia.

Infidelity, in all its shapes, operates and matures in *the heart*. The man whose heart is right, needs no argument or miracle, to convince him that the gospel is true and adapted to his case. Why reason to prove from the history of the sun, its fitness to give light? The blinded man is sightless, despite of all logic: and unbelievers are voluntarily blind. Food to the taste, air to the lungs, water to thirst, is not more fit than the gospel to the honest hearted sinner. Argument changes no heart. Chalmers was admired for his astronomical discourses; but whom did they convert? And even Foster erred in supposing that a better pulpit style would secure the gospel a more favorable hearing among the learned. They admired the eloquence of Robert Hall, but they retained their opposition to the doctrines he preached. Milton, and Cowper, and Pollok, display genius they say, but it is one thing to admire their poetry, and another to love their theology.

#### INFERENCES.

This discussion shows us

1. The field of ministerial operation. The gospel ministry has to operate upon *hearts*. Were it merely to diffuse information, or convince judgments, our work were easy. But it is to attack and to conquer that strong castle, the human heart. Hence our dependence for success on God. Were it otherwise, effort would be sufficient and prayer unavailing. As it is, the humblest, obscurest, poorest, christian may labor for the conversion of the world, as really and as effectually as the loftiest, the most illustrious, the wealthiest on earth. It shows us

2. The reason why christians are imperfect. We are not *perfectly disposed to be perfect*. It shows us

3. The reason why unconverted men do not embrace the gospel. The heart is wrong.

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## CHRIST CRUCIFIED, THE SUM OF THE GOSPEL:

Introductory Sermon, preached by Rev. R. B. C. Howell, D. D. in entering on the pastorate of the Second Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, April 28, 1850.

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*"I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*—1 Cor. ii: 2.

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"Jesus Christ, and him crucified." In this form of language is described the satisfaction to divine justice, made by Messiah on behalf of sinners, of which the *great central act* was his crucifixion. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." This is the sum of the gospel, as taught by the apostles, and by every true minister in all ages. In its unspeakable excellencies and glory, the soul of Paul was ever wholly absorbed. "I came not to you," said he to the Corinthians, and his manner was the same everywhere, "I came not to you with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The arts of rhetoric, the skill of the philosopher, the management of the trained logician, with *such* a subject, what are all these

appliances? I dared not to dazzle you with the learning of the schools. I long since determined to know nothing of all these, but in the simplest manner, to hold up before you "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This was Paul's privilege; to this he had devoted his life; nor would he allow himself to become entangled in any worldly interests or pursuits, that would retard or embarrass the great work.

It is no less *our* duty than it was that of the apostles and primitive ministry, to preach, and with the same simplicity and directness, "Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Upon no other power or wisdom can the hope of blessing be safely predicated. Through him only, we are reconciled to God, sanctified by his Spirit, and rendered "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The ministry that does not so present the gospel, is destitute of either energy or vitality. It is cheerless as the arid desert, and must lead to ultimate disappointment and disaster. God forbid that I, or that you, should ever look to any other source for hope and salvation. About, in compliance with your unanimous invitation, to enter upon the duties of the pastorate of this church, with the history of which I am so familiar, and with many of the older members of which I was formerly so intimately associated, I may, as I trust, without presumption, adopt the language of Paul in the passage, and from this pulpit thus solemnly declare for myself, that "I [have] determined not to know any thing among *you*, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

"Here is firm footing, here is solid rock,  
All is sea besides, sinks under us,  
Bestorms, and then devours."

"Jesus Christ, and him crucified!" In what aspects shall I preach to you this great doctrine? But for *our sins*, his sacrifice would have been unnecessary. Holy beings need no Redeemer. We are all, however, sinners against God. We are corrupt in heart and transgressors of his laws. Jehovah might, in justice, as he did in the case of fallen angels, have left us to the destruction which we had thus wickedly brought upon ourselves. Why he determined to save us or any other human beings, we know not. We



know only that in this work of infinite benevolence, he was impelled by love: for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Perdition is the natural consequence of sin, since sin and misery are inseparable. They are never apart from each other in this world or in the next. The only means, therefore, by which we can possibly reach happiness, is found in the pardon of our sins and our restoration to holiness. But how can this be done? Can man for himself accomplish it? Impossible. As well might we attempt with our individual strength to heave the earth from its orbit. Nor can our deliverance ever come from God, to whom alone we can look, unless at the same time his justice is honored and his righteousness exalted. A third person, it is very evident, must interpose, who has the ability to achieve these glorious results. In the covenant of salvation, therefore, (the grace, and wisdom, and glory of which, who can ever adequately conceive!) Jesus Christ undertook this great work. He became our Médiator, and voluntarily assumed the obligation to redeem and save us. In accordance with this amazing fact, we are instructed that "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men: the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." In this gracious arrangement, as in one rich fountain, all the powers are included by which we "miserable offenders" are brought back from corruption and crime to a state of holiness, fitted for communion with God, and raised to perfection and glory in heaven.

But was not Jesus Christ *God* or *man*? How in either case, could he have secured the end proposed? In the former he would have been the party offended, since it is against God that we have all sinned; and in the latter, he would have been the party offending, and therefore justly obnoxious to punishment. In neither case could he have been our deliverer. He must possess to this end a peculiar character. The gospel accordingly makes known to us the great fact, that Jehovah, who is one God, has, in the work of our redemption and salvation, revealed himself to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, one in essence and equal in divine properties, but distinct persons in the adorable Trinity. *God* the Son, became the *man*

Christ Jesus. He took upon him our nature, and "was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He is not, therefore, God exclusively, since he unites humanity with his divinity; nor exclusively man, uniting as he does divinity with his humanity. He is God *and* man. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He is, therefore, in the covenant, a different person both from God on the one hand, and from man on the other. He was, consequently, fully prepared to approach the Father on our behalf, and by offering the required satisfaction to secure our salvation.

The necessity of the united divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, demands a moment's consideration.

Jesus Christ *must be God*, because our life demanded his death, which, had he been less than divine, he would have had no right to give. Those who are subject to another, cannot dispose of themselves, or their services, at their own option. All men are the property of their Creator. They are in every respect subject to his commands. Their life is his gift; is to be employed for his purposes; and they are not at liberty to dispose of it but in accordance with his instructions. They *might* voluntarily offer to *give* their life; they might propose to gain by *its sacrifice* immeasurable good; but it *does not* belong to them; to offer it up would, therefore, be sin. None but God has absolute power over himself. But Jesus Christ has absolute power over himself, and has exercised it in our behalf. When about to go to the cross, he said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." As God, he is the source and fountain of all law, and necessarily controlled by no superior. It was competent for *him* to stoop from his dignity in any way, and for any purpose, his wisdom and benevolence might suggest. Having, in the exercise of infinite grace, assumed our nature, he had an undoubted right to employ it as he might think proper, to secure the purposes of his government in consonance with the purposes of his grace, in the salvation of man. He did, therefore, accordingly give his life a ransom for our pardon and deliverance. For these and many other rea-

sons, the *divinity* of Christ is essential to our redemption. His perfect *humanity* was equally indispensable to the same great work.

The redemption of man was something more than a mere act of power. Shame and suffering must also be endured. Such was the decision of infinite wisdom. "Christ must suffer." He was "delivered [crucified and slain,] by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," because "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission" of sins. No being, other than man, can, so far as we know, die, in the sense of the law. The expiation for sin must be made in the nature that sinned. He was, therefore, a partaker of our nature, sin only excepted. He felt even its temptations and infirmities. Thus we are instructed by the divine word—"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." His humanity was, therefore, necessary. He assumed it with direct reference to his suffering upon the cross, that by his blood he might cleanse us from all sin. In his human nature, as well as in his divinity, he is our Prophet, our Priest, our King; he, in a word, performs all the offices of our adorable Mediator.

The *union* of *divinity* and *humanity*, in the person of Messiah, was of the utmost consequence on many accounts. Especially was it requisite to give him the necessary influence with both God and man, to secure the purposes of his grace. With the Father, the influence of the Son is boundless. What has he ever denied him? What can he ever deny him? Indeed, all power and judgment, in heaven and on earth, are committed to him. And what influence can he not exert over men by means of his word and Spirit? When Jesus Christ thus solicits us to life and glory, who can resist?

Such I understand to be the character of our blessed Redeemer, who is presented before us in the gospel in all his love and mercy. To him we, sinful as we are, may ever have the freest access. Into his communion we may at any time enter without hesitation or fear. Every encouragement is offered us to throw ourselves into his embraces, and trusting in him in all things, to commit ourselves to his guidance.

He is our brother; he loves us beyond our conception; he sympathizes with us in all our conflicts and sufferings; and he will never leave us nor forsake us.

*This* is the glorious being who was crucified. "In the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Pursued by the bitter malice of the priests and rulers, whose envy and malignity were more cruel than the grave, he was ultimately betrayed into their hands. They abused and denied him in the presence of Pilate; they scourged and mocked him; they nailed him to the cross. There he bled, and groaned, and agonized; and amidst sufferings and miseries unspeakable, he expired. Even the physical universe was not unaffected by the scene.

"Nature from her seat, sighing through all her works,  
Gave signs of wo."

The glorious sun in mid-heaven hid his face; darkness spread her mantle upon the skies; and convulsions heaved the trembling earth. It was the Prince of life who there suffered. It was the Lord of glory that they crucified. They took him down from the cross and buried him. The third day he arose from the dead. He mingled after his resurrection, familiarly, with his disciples. Ultimately from Olivet, he, in their presence, "ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, that he might give gifts unto men." There he remains at the right hand of the Father, our great High Priest, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." These were the acts which constituted mainly the work of our redemption.

I may now inquire, what we more particularly gain by the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To this great transaction the minds of men, from the very infancy of the world, had been constantly directed, by prophecies, by sacrifices, and by all the types of the Mosaic economy. The deed was now done; and by that "*one offering* he hath perfected forever all them that are sanctified." The efficacy of the oblation is infinite. When under the law, the worshiper brought his victim to the altar, he thereby acknowledged his sins and accountability to God; when



it was slain by the priest, he confessed that his own life was forfeited to the claims of justice; and he offered the life, and blood, and body, a substitute for his own, and a supplication for his pardon and acceptance. All this was effective, however, only as it was expressive of reliance upon "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus Christ in his life of holy obedience, fulfilled perfectly all the obligations of the law. He *then* assumed our sins, and bore their penalty. His life is violently destroyed; his blood is poured out; and he himself, the priest as well as the victim, offers upon the cross, the pain of which was prefigured by the fire of the altar, his life, his blood, his body, his soul, his divinity, as one sacrifice to infinite justice, a supplication of boundless power to the Father, for our pardon, sanctification and salvation. It is enough. It is complete. It can never fail to save all who trust in him. "If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer (only the types,) sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ (the reality,) who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God."

"Heaven wept that man might smile; heaven bled  
That man might never die."

From the cross bursts forth a perpetual flood of light, and glory, and immortal life. O 'tis for man a theme of unending thankfulness and joy! As a christian, as a minister of the gospel, among you, or in any place, "I have determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

But are men saved as a matter of course because Jesus Christ died? Far from it. If we are saved by him, Christ must be formed *in* us, the hope of glory. There must be a personal application of the merits of his atonement to cleanse us from pollution and qualify us for heaven, or Christ is to us of no avail.

"God is reconciled by the death of his Son;" but without repentance and faith in him, we are not "reconciled to God." A satisfaction is made in our behalf, but we still remain under sin and condemnation, until we personally and upon the terms prescribed by him, accept and embrace it.

The great act by which this is done is faith. Hence we are taught, that "without faith it is impossible to please God." But on the other hand, it is said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." By faith, then, we accept the salvation offered and receive "all the benefits of the death of Christ." Faith unites us to Christ, and according to the divine constitution, makes us, in the estimation of the law, one with him. We are, therefore, regarded as having lived in his life, died in his death, and risen again in his resurrection. All this *we are regarded* as having done, since *he*, by whom it was *really* accomplished, is *one with us*. He represents us; and what is done by our representative, is done by ourselves. These are the great truths perpetually held up before us in the ordinances of the gospel. Because Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead, we who are dead to sin are buried with him by baptism into death, and like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also arise, to walk in newness of life; and since his body was broken, and his blood shed for our deliverance, we, in the Lord's supper, receive their appointed symbols, the bread and the wine, and in such a manner that they become physically incorporated with our very being. Thus is strikingly portrayed that spiritual union which every believer has with our Lord Jesus Christ by faith.

And further, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life for our life, and who died to save us from death, we have the word of God to enlighten and direct us, and the Holy Spirit to regenerate, to sanctify, and to fit us for the glory of heaven. How rich are these favors! Without the oracles of divine truth, what could we know? Here is that

"Bright candle of the Lord;  
 Star of eternity; the only star  
 By which the bark of man could navigate  
 The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss  
 Securely."

And the Holy Spirit! Without him we should be utterly helpless. He it is who reproves the world of sin, of right-

eousness, and of judgment; he it is who quickens us into life, purifies our nature, and gives us the requisite holiness; and by him only, the blood of Christ is applied which cleanses us from all sin.

Such is an exceedingly brief sketch of the aspects in which it is my purpose to preach to you "Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" not as saving all men by his death, irrespective of their moral character; nor as delivering them by calling their minds to a better law, and leading them by a purer example; nor as having placed them under the gospel by compliance with the institutions of which they may, if they will, save themselves. Each of these, and every other similar hypothesis, is degrading to the gospel. Those who rely upon any of them, will find themselves at last deceived and lost. No; God's plan is, as we have seen, infinitely more exalted. "Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," are essential to benefit from his death, and for all those who have these spiritual endowments, he becomes salvation. "He bore our sins (their punishment) in his own body on the tree." "He was made sin (a sin offering,) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Truly may it be said of all who do now, or ever will, shine amid the radiant ranks of Cherubim and Seraphim on high, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." These vital truths I shall, God being my helper, hold up before you perpetually, in public, in private, and from house to house. I shall exercise a proper respect for the opinions of others, and I shall cherish that courtesy which is due to all men; especially shall I seek, with earnest assiduity, the union and co-operation of all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ; but I shall turn aside from my principles for no considerations whatever. In the performance of my duties I shall not be careful for excellency of speech, or of man's wisdom, anxious only to preach the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, "knowing nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

In conclusion, I remark,

1. That no other subject like this has power to move the heart of the sinner and bring him to repentance.

Talk to him of the miseries he is bringing upon himself

and others, he feels not. Point him to the wrath of an offended God, he remains callous. Speak of an eternal hell, he hears you but answers not. Such appeals may momentarily alarm his fears, but they are soon lost in the excitements and gratifications of life. But who can resist the message that comes from the cross, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified?" It is "the goodness of God that leadeth men to repentance." This moves and subdues the soul. The sinner thus arrested, ceases to rebel, and exclaims,

"Nay, but I yield, I yield,  
I can hold out no more;  
I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own thee conquerer."

Beloved friends, for you Jesus Christ bled, and groaned, and died. O, will you not look to him, repent, believe, and be saved? Do not, I entreat you, destroy yourselves. "I pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

2. To the penitent seeker of religion this great truth comes like the light of day upon the bewildered traveler.

"Christ crucified" is his hope, his only hope, and, blessed be God, his sufficient hope. To him you may go freely. His own language of invitation is, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He gives you every proof that he will never reject you. Renounce yourself, and every earthly dependance; submit your will wholly to God, and fear not. He will save you.

"Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream,  
All the fitness he requireth  
Is to feel your need of him."

Remember, "They that trust in the Lord shall never be confounded, world without end."

3. Finally, my brethren, how boundless are our obligations to him who, for us, submitted to be crucified!

All the hopes, and blessings, and prospects of the gospel, are ours. We glory in the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us, therefore, devote our souls and bodies "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God,



which is our reasonable service." As pastor and people, we have been brought together under most favorable auspices. Our interests, our motives and our objects, are the same. We seek alike the glory of God, the honor of divine truth, and the salvation of men. Let our motto be, *fidelity*—fidelity in all things, at all times, in all circumstances, and until death shall terminate our labors. Let us show ourselves not unworthy of the profession we have made of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. For success in all "our works of faith and labors of love," our dependance is, and must be, upon the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God [only] giveth the increase." To him, therefore, having in the several stations to which providence has assigned us, performed faithfully our whole duty, let us look for grace, and blessing, and ultimate victory, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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### THE WAY OF SALVATION.

It can scarcely have failed to be observed, by any experienced traveler, that explicit directions from one place to another are by no means easily given, even by those who are intelligent and perfectly acquainted with the way. Not one citizen, perhaps, in five hundred, even in the city in which he has been born, and may have spent all his days, can give to an enquirer directions to a place a mile distant, so unambiguous and clear, that he may certainly find it without further interrogations. He can show you the way by going with you: but his description of it may mislead you by its inaccuracy, its deficiency, or its very redundancy. We do not remember but one instance in our whole life, not a short one, in which we received in such a case, perfect, un mistakeable instructions. These were given by an old gentleman two generations ago, and accompanied by an exact map of the whole road, and of all the principal objects along which it lay.

We offer this as a brief and very imperfect apology for the very inadequate notice we incidentally took in our April No. of Dr. Howell's late work, entitled "The Way of Salvation."

Nor do we at this time introduce it again to the attention of our readers, because we have any design either to recommend or to review the work. If it needed our recommendation, cheerfully would we give it, but it does not. It will be read, and will be the means of great good. But our business is to *preach*, not to *review*. In this case, however, Dr. Howell's book falls exactly within the range of our profession. And we refer to it again because we desire that our readers should precisely understand what we think of a subject which, more than all others, affects their interests. We would so speak, not only that we may be understood, but so that we cannot be misunderstood. And this may subject both ourselves and our friends to the inconvenience of apparent tautology.

We have said that the phrase, "The Way of Salvation," may mean either of two things. It may mean God's method of saving; or it may mean the course taken and pursued to the end by those who are saved. The former includes the latter. On the part of the individual saved, the former is a matter of understanding and of faith; the latter of conduct only, including the internal as well as the external.

1. God's method of saving. In this aspect of the subject, it is necessary to distinguish between the methods by which God has *proposed* to save, and *that* by which he *does* save. Of the former, there have never been but two: obedience to law, and faith in Christ. Both have been universally rejected wherever the offer has been made, except in those cases in which, by the supervention of *that* method by which he *does* save, they have been made willing in the day of his power. The same depravity that disobeys the law, disbelieves the glad tidings also. Hence the necessity of grace: or the coming in of a special, preternatural, unmerited, unsought, and although resistible (for it is always resisted,) yet effective agency, by which the sinner, he voluntarily concurring, is turned from the world and sin to God and holiness. God's method by which he *does* save, includes instrumentally his law; the gospel; the dispensations of his providence; all those scriptural means used by some, with a view to the salvation of others; and even the conduct of the individual saved, whether designed by him to this end or not. This is all as true of those saved under the law, as of those saved in the time of the Messiah's personal presence on earth.

In no one particular is the distinction between the Calvinian theory and the Arminian more obvious, than in the *beginning* of the course of the returning sinner. And in no one particular is the former more perfectly sustained by scripture, sound philosophy, and universal experience, while the latter does equal violence to all. The Arminian, in every respect in which he differs from others to his advantage and their detriment, makes himself to differ, and is always beforehand with God; the Calvinian, in every such instance ascribes the difference to God, and considers his own movements effects, not causes. True the Arminian admits that God gives him the *means* and the *power*: but he maintains that these are equally given to *all*, and that some improve the grace given and others do not. In vain do we allege in reply, that inasmuch as it would be unjust to command impossibilities; the grant of *power* is not grace, but justice: and that to claim the credit of *disposition* to improve, and *improvement* itself, is to claim precisely what sovereign, distinguishing grace, itself in its efficacious influence, and it alone, produces. As regards what God *proposes* to do, or *does*, for us: to believe this is a part of faith. As regards what we do, however influenced thereto, this is obedience and involves our agency and accountability. All this comes under the second view we took of the subject, which is,

2. The course taken and pursued to the end by the saved. To illustrate and enforce this latter, is the great object of the gospel ministry. Prayer moves God; preaching, man.

We have before said, and we repeat it with great earnestness, that on this latter subject, we are anxious to see a well written tract, either from the pen of Dr. Howell, or some other competent and powerful pen.

As regards the course, after the beginning, pursued to the end by the saved, there is between the Arminian and ourselves, in some respects, little difference. With both it is the path of obedience. The two material points of difference are: that with him it is self-moved and contingent; with us divinely controlled and certain. In other words, *we* believe in the *final perseverance*, not *inactivity*, of all believers; and that were our perseverance dependant upon us, we should all be certainly lost. Of course the very word perseverance implies the most determined fidelity, as-

sidiuity and zeal, which may be all perfectly voluntary. Yet were there no special, gracious influence moving thereto, other than what is true of those not saved, we should certainly be no better nor safer than they.

The point, then, to which this article, already extended beyond what we at first contemplated, is reduced, has regard to the *beginning* of our course—our *commencing* to be the servants or children of God.

Suppose we were to admit, for the sake of reducing the argument to the lowest possible point, that the sinner in turning to God, and the believer in his future course, goes every step voluntarily. There is a *state* anterior to the volitions which decides their character, and that state in the sinner cannot meet the divine approval, if the awful doctrine of total depravity be true. But whether in their incipency there be any voluntariness in the exercises of the awakened sinner, demands a doubt. The first impressions are convictions of guilt and sense of danger on account of it. Against such convictions, every faculty and power of the man rises in its most potent energy. The happiness and safety of conscious innocence are among virtue's strongest safeguards. The heart revolts against the remotest apprehension of guilt. Who, without pain, can think of a verdict against his life or reputation, in a court of justice, where the gallows or the penitentiary must be the forfeit? But here men are supposed to be *seeking* to be found *guilty* in the court of high heaven, with the penalty of interminable anguish threatened, and certain, if cast. Hence all our self-righteousness, and palliations, and excuses, and even our charges against God, both as regards the exactness of his requirements, the inequalities of his providences, and the severity of his punishments. Whether man is *ever* voluntarily found guilty, we say, demands a doubt, and this is not only not even the first step in religion, but is properly a *state anterior* to any step. In fact, we do not believe the law to be holy, or the gospel to be gracious and true, because we *will* to do so, but because we see that such really is their true and unquestionable character. And who ever loved any object because he *first* *willed* to love it? In truth the whole Arminian scheme from first to last, of *seeking* religion, is a momentous humbug, of which the world and the church ought to be disabused with as little delay as pos-



sible. The doctrines of grace termed Calvinian, are as clearly taught in the Bible and sustained by the experience of every man, as are indicated in the world of nature the laws of chemistry or of natural philosophy; and the opposite of them as certainly doomed to share the fate of tyranny, sorcery and witchcraft. The architectural beauty of the most magnificent temple may be marred by the strokes of an axe or a hatchet, and its proportions may be concealed by collections of cobwebs.

Our limits allow us to cite only a single passage, which may serve for both illustration and proof of the position we have taken. We maintain that *grace* not only institutes the race-course, prescribes its laws and conditions, and awards its honors to the successful: but that *it takes each competitor by the hand and puts him at the starting point into the course*. "Not as though I had already attained (le but, or reached the goal,) either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii: 12–13.

The Greeks used the word *Katalambanein* here rendered *apprehend*, "that I may apprehend" to mean, to reach the goal, to touch the mark; and the word *Kalalambanesthai* here rendered *apprehended*, "for which also I am apprehended," to mean, to be led by the hand into the course at the place of starting. "All this discourse," say Beausobre and Lenfant, "of St. Paul's is figurative, and his terms appear to be taken from the games of the Greeks." They used *Katalambanein* to mean (*toucher le but*), to touch the mark; and *Kalalambanesthai* to mean, to be led 'by the hand (*etre introduit dans la carriere*), into the course or career. In a word, Paul the Apostle represents that in his conversion and salvation, and he is a fair type of all, not only was he not seeking the favor of God or improving any grace given, but wandering from Christ and opposing him; and that he was graciously and powerfully seized hold of by him and led to the track, and placed in the course which he was then running with all the eagerness of a Grecian racer.

P. S.—We are glad to be called on by the compositor for an additional page of material, inasmuch as it affords us an opportunity to meet one prominent objection which may be alleged by some, against the views we have above submitted. If the doctrines contained in the foregoing pages be true, what becomes of the rational, moral, free, agency of the sinner, in repenting and believing, or remaining impenitent and unbelieving, as the case may be? The answer is, that our accountability involving our rational, moral, free, or voluntary agency, does not depend upon any acts or states of the soul, but upon the relations it sustains to God, and the capacities with which he has endowed us. He has endowed us with the faculty of loving, and has revealed himself as infinitely lovely. He has endowed us with the faculty of believing, and he has established the claims of his revelation beyond any reasonable doubt. He has endowed us with moral sense; in other words, with heart and conscience, and susceptibilities of sorrow and regret; and that we have been guilty of violating the best code of laws in the universe, is indisputably true. Hence our obligations to love, repentance and faith. The possession of a disposition to comply with these requisitions, has no necessary connection with the obligations to comply. In other words, obligations do not depend upon dispositions. If they did, there would be as much virtue in the world as there is duty: that is, men would be under no obligation to be any better than they are. The manner in which we do become possessed of the right disposition has, therefore, nothing to do either with our obligation or of our ability, which is of course always commensurate with it. The bestowment of the disposition is an act of grace, to do which God is under no obligation in order to make him just in requiring obedience. The supervision of this abounding goodness is provided for neither in the authority, exactions and penalty of the law; nor in the invitations of mercy through the mediatorship of Messiah. It is the coming in of a subsequent provision, which avails itself of the use of the law to convince us that we are sinners in having transgressed it; and of the use of the gospel to convince us that we are sinners of an aggravated class, on account of our having rejected its gracious overtures of pardon.

ED.

# THE BAPTIST PREACHER.

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## SATANIC AGENCY:

A Sermon, delivered before the "Ministers' Meeting" of the Rappahannock Association, March 29, 1850, by REV. A. BROADBUSH. Published by request.

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*"Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."*—1 Pet. v: 8.

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Christ came into the world "to bring life and immortality to light." He appeared on earth that he might open up a way to the throne of God, and might invite sinners to enter that way and live forever. In the accomplishment of this great purpose, he made known not only the perfections of God—his attributes of love, mercy and power—the glories of heaven and the happiness of the blessed in another world, more clearly than these things had ever been exhibited or known before—but he also drew aside the curtain which veiled the mysteries of eternal punishment, and opened to our view the horrors of the world of woe. He showed us a vast dreary waste, peopled by innumerable intelligences, all subject to one supreme ruler. I say to one supreme ruler: for the scripture clearly indicates the fact, that among the lost spirits and fallen angels, there is one who exercises a controlling authority. Indeed, the title by which this being is recognized in scripture, is alone a strong proof of the truth we have just stated. For while all the other fallen angels are called demons (*Δαίμονιοι*), he alone is called the devil (*Διabolος*); the scripture thus attributing to him a pre-

eminence both in wickedness and in power. It is this being and his operations who will engage our attention on the present occasion; and we would direct our notice to

I. *The vastness of his power.* It is an undisputed sentiment, that impressions produced on the mind in childhood, exercise a powerful influence on the sentiments and conduct in after life. This sentiment finds an exemplification in the impressions frequently produced on the young mind, by the representations of the devil, with which youth is often favored by instructors or parents. The creature of hoofs, horns and tail, that frightens our youthful fancy, excites only the smile of maturer years, and along with the false representation, the thing represented is too often depreciated. Persons thus often learn to regard the devil as merely an ideal being; or, at most, as very limited in his power, and as capable of inflicting little or no injury on the human race. Perhaps, too, the representations above named may have had some influence in inducing the belief, that the Satan of the Bible is a mere prosopopœia—a personification of the principle of evil. I have time only to say, that this opinion is as unscriptural as it is unphilosophical and irrational. One expression alone, used by Paul in his letter to the Ephesian church, establishes both the personality and the power of the devil and his satellites. “For we wrestle not,” says the apostle, “against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”\* Taking it for granted, then, that the personality of Satan is clearly taught in the scriptures, I observe that the vastness of his power is indicated

1. By the extent of his dominions. He is the king of hell. What may be the extent of this place (for I think it is a place,) we cannot tell, with certainty, though probably it is vast even beyond our conceptions. This dreary region is filled with millions upon millions of fallen angels, of whom *he* is not only the acknowledged sovereign, but the complete controller. This fact is indicated by our Lord when he says, “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”† Here these beings

\* Ephe. vi: 12.

† Matt. xxv: 41.



are called his angels, ministers, or servants. And again the apostle, in describing the hosts of hell, says, "And they had a king over them which is the angel of the bottomless pit."\* But beside the vast power thus exercised by the devil over the fallen angels, it is probable he controls the departed spirits of wicked men. Having exercised a powerful influence over their minds, hearts and actions on earth—having lured them on to eternal destruction—after they have passed the pale of mercy—after they have gone beyond the boundary of God's, protection and influence—he takes them *completely* under his control, and makes them *entirely* the creatures of his will. Oh! how is this thought calculated to aggravate the punishment of the lost! The devil has brought them to this place of woe, only to mock them in their sufferings and to make them his slaves! But beside the vast domains of hell thus thickly populated, there is still another region over which the devil exercises a powerful sway. That region is this world. He is represented as "the god of this world." Here he has set up a kingdom; and though some inroads have been made upon his dominion—though some of his subjects have been captured, and are now gallantly fighting the battles of the "captain of our salvation"—still he reigns over far the greater part of the world: and he not only reigns as a king, but is worshiped as a god; for we are assured in the scriptures, that those who worship idols, are but worshiping the devil under another name.

How great must be the power of a being reigning over so vast a region, and ruling so great a number of subjects! Hundreds of millions on earth and in hell acknowledging his authority and submitting to his will! But we remark that the vastness of the devil's power is shown

2. By his ubiquity. I do not wish to be understood as ascribing to Satan the attribute of omnipresence. *This* belongs to God alone. That figure of speech, however, is recognized as legitimate and proper which regards a person as doing himself what is really performed by his servants or agents. Thus the President of the United States is represented as the executive officer of the country; though the duties pertaining to this branch of the public service are

really performed by a number of subordinates who are his agents. A king is said to win a battle or to make a treaty, when he is really hundreds of miles from the spot where these things are done. He acts by his authorized agents. Thus when we speak of the ubiquity of the devil, we are to be understood as including among his actions those things which are done by the instrumentality of the numberless agents whom he employs; and such is the rapidity with which he receives intelligence from all parts of earth and hell, that he is enabled to operate almost or quite as efficiently as if personally present. We know that our own spirits, chained to the clog of flesh which binds them to earth, can still, in one moment, soar to the remotest star; what, then, must be the speed of that spirit which is disencumbered of the body! The rapidity with which intelligence flies along the electric wires becomes the pace of a snail when compared with the swiftness with which one of these spirits darts from one end of the earth to the other. Our own observation and experience establish the truth of this assertion. Does a sinner *here* become convicted of sin, concerned on account of his situation, and anxious for salvation? The devil is ready in a moment to fill his mind with specious falsehoods. To persuade him that religion is a burdensome, gloomy affair; that it is time enough yet to become a christian, &c., and thus by every means in his power to deceive and ruin him. Is an effort made, at the same time, to propagate the gospel in *China* on the other side of the globe? He is there personally, or by his agents, to prejudice the minds of the benighted idolators against foreigners—to erect a barrier between their hearts and the word of God—to inflame their passions and to thwart the purposes of God's servants. Does a Pusey in *England*, moved by a love of pomp and display, and influenced by a desire for notoriety and the praise of men, contemplate a union with the abomination of Babylon? The devil is there to aid, abet and encourage. Is an effort made *here* by specious pretences to lure the people of God from the path of duty—to captivate them by eloquence and learning—to deceive them by plausibilities—or to intimidate them by threats? He is ready by the most insinuating arts to second the project—to introduce coldness, distrust and dissension in the church, and, "if possible, to deceive the very elect themselves."

The power of the devil is indicated,

3. By his command of the elements and the diseases of the human body. The case of Job clearly proves that he is permitted to exercise great power in this respect. In that case we find that he sent lightning from the clouds to destroy the flocks—the winds of heaven to overturn the house in which the children of Job were feasting, and to crush them under its ruins—and finally, a noisome and painful disease on the body of Job himself. Nor is the New Testament account devoid of examples of a similar character; for we are assured by our Lord, that the woman who was bowed down by a spirit of infirmity, had been bound by Satan for eighteen years.\* And even now it is probable that many of the afflictions and calamities, which visit men, are induced by the immediate agency of the devil. It is true that God “rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm,” but the devil frequently sets them in motion. The most fearful diseases, and the most appalling calamities, are instruments which Satan frequently uses in wreaking his malice on the human race. His power in this respect, as well as in all other respects, is, of course, under the control of Jehovah; still it is fearfully great.

4. Again, another, and the last evidence we shall notice of the vastness of Satan’s power, is found in the influence he has over the human heart, and the facility with which he enters it. One sinful thought, one unguarded moment, affords an opportunity for the exercise of his influence which is never neglected. He enters the heart by a thousand avenues, and in a thousand forms. He sometimes presents to the mind and the senses a favorite passion or appetite, clothed in the brightest colors and wearing the most alluring form. Again he approaches, bearing in his hands treasures of gold and silver, and he, too, often entices his victim, in pursuit of these, on to sorrow, care and death. Sometimes wearing the specious appearance of plausible error, he beguiles the christian by some *ignis fatuus* he has placed before him into a quagmire of distress and pain. Indeed his exterior is frequently so fair that he appears as an angel of light, and it requires the closest scrutiny and the most prayerful examination to discover the cheat. Paul says to the Corinthians: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is

\* Luke xiii: 16.

transformed into an angel of light.”\* Of Satan’s power in influencing the heart and mind our daily experience and observation would convince us, had we no other evidence. The christian finds, alas! too often that he has beguiled *him* from the path of duty; that he is frequently drawing *his* thoughts into improper channels; that he has induced *him* to utter an improper expression or to commit a sinful action. And he sees around him the evidences of Satan’s power and influence over the human heart and mind in the thousands he is leading to eternal destruction. But besides the evidences furnished by the word of God, and by our own experience and observation of the devil’s power and influence as they are ordinarily exerted, we have accounts in the scripture of a remarkable and fearful power which he possessed in the days of Christ and his apostles. At that time he sometimes took possession (generally by his ministers,) of the mental and moral faculties of men, and entire control of their actions and words. The demoniacs appear to have been entirely subject to the will of the evil spirits who possessed them. But while demoniacal power and influence are fearfully exhibited in the cases to which allusion has just been made, there is a case of Satanic influence mentioned in the scripture of a character still more awful—I refer to the case of Judas. We are told that “after the sop, Satan ENTERED INTO HIM.”† Here the prince himself comes into action. He trusts this work to none of his ministers. Before this time he had often tempted Judas, but now “*he enters into him.*” He takes complete possession of him. He becomes identified and incorporated (if I may so speak,) with his nature. With this miserable wretch the pains of hell commenced on this side the grave. These, then, are the arguments and evidences we adduce in proof of the vastness of Satan’s power. We pass on to consider,

II. *The object of the devil’s efforts.* His great object, in all his actions and efforts, is to oppose God and to ruin man. His office is to fight against God—to alienate the affections of men more and more from their Creator and Benefactor—to harden their hearts—to blind their minds—to steep their souls in sin and guilt—and, finally, to plunge them into hell. Driven from the high place he occupied in heaven,

\* 2 Cor. xi: 13.

† John xii: 26.



he became perfectly and pre-eminently wicked. Being thus the antipode of God in nature as well as in situation, it is not strange he should hate and oppose him. God, too, had conquered him, and consigned him to the place of punishment he inhabited, so that all the evil passions which glowed in his bosom, lashed into fury by the sufferings he endured, urged him on to hate and to oppose *Him* who had thus punished him.

Permitted by the inscrutable wisdom of God to know of the existence of the earth, and to enter it, a fine opportunity was presented for the exercise of his hellish malice. Every motive which could possibly influence such a being operated to induce a hatred of man and an effort to ruin him. Man being pure and holy, made in the image of God, the devil saw reflected in him the likeness of that Being who was the object of his implacable hatred. Here, then, was a powerful incentive to action and to effort. But in addition to this, the devil could readily perceive God's purposes of love and mercy towards the creature he had just formed. To thwart these purposes of love, to defeat or oppose these gracious intentions, was of itself a powerful inducement to energetic, earnest exertion. Thus stimulated, Satan was not slow to put into action his malicious machinations. He sought the double object of opposing God and ruining man, by tempting him to disobedience. In this effort he succeeded, alas! too well. Our first parents listened to the voice of the tempter, and fell. Encouraged by success he redoubled his efforts, and enlarged the sphere of his operations as the human family increased; and so successful were his exertions, that, in less than two thousand years from the time of the first temptation, only one family could be found fearing or serving God out of the millions that inhabited the earth. Such now had become the wickedness of men, such the influence of the devil, that God determined to sweep the earth of its inhabitants (with the exception of the family just mentioned,) at one stroke. The flood came and took them all away! The devil, however, not discouraged by the removal of his subjects from earth to hell, or by the character of the family which remained on earth, commenced his assaults upon the most pious of the little company whom God had preserved from the flood. Here again he succeeded, and Noah fell. Inde-

fatigable in his exertions, implacable in his hatred of God and man, the devil continued his efforts with unabated ardor, from this time till the coming of Christ; seducing Israel from the path of duty, ruling the nations around her with a rod of iron, and plunging them into a vortex of vice and misery. When the Messiah made his appearance on earth, we would have supposed that here was one whom Satan *durst* not attack. We should have thought that awed by the glorious attributes and august character of this divine personage, he would have shrunk back abashed into his own appropriate hell. But we find it far otherwise. Emboldened by previous success, puffed up by the power he possessed, conscious that an antagonist was before him more formidable than any he had yet encountered, influenced by the spirit of those who said, "this is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours," the devil concentrates all his mighty energies, all his vast resources, on one great object—the destruction of the Saviour. And for the accomplishment of this purpose he loses no time. For no sooner does the infant Jesus make his appearance on earth, than he influences the jealous heart of Herod to make an effort for his destruction. Foiled in this attempt by the providence of God, he audaciously assails the Saviour in person, at the commencement of his ministry. Every art which hellish ingenuity could invent, is used to influence the mind or conduct of Christ. But all in vain. Now, for the first time, his temptations *entirely* fail to produce an impression. He drives his fiery darts against the adamant, and while they produce no impression on their object, the recoil sends a thrill of pain through the heart of him who directed them. Undismayed by his defeat, but learning wisdom from the conflict, Satan now directs his efforts against the Saviour through the medium of the proud, jealous Pharisees. He induces them to oppose, reject and persecute him—he takes complete possession of one of Christ's own disciples by *entering into Judas*, and by these means he brings him before the bar of Pilate, procures his condemnation, and finally leads him to the cross. Now no doubt he thought his triumph complete, and there were probably thousands of the hosts of hell collected around the accursed tree to witness the fall of their great opponent. But with what horror do they hear the cry of triumph bursting from his lips even

while hanging upon the cross! When he exclaimed, "*it is finished!*" then they perceived, for the first time, that they had unwittingly contributed to his triumph, and that in the hour of death he had achieved his greatest victory.

Though conscious that the great battle had been fought and the victory won by Christ, Satan does not discontinue his opposition; he does not resign the weapons of his warfare, but on the contrary he appears, if possible, to redouble his exertions. No sooner does Christ rise from the grave, than Satan puts a lie into the minds of the Jews by persuading them that the disciples of Jesus had stolen the body away. And from that time to this, he has continued his opposition and hatred to Christ and his cause. Commencing his operations by persecuting the christians, he found this to strengthen instead of weakening them. He discovered that through all the tortures to which they were exposed, their numbers increased, and that from the ashes of one martyr a hundred disciples sprung up to supply his place. He immediately changed his tactics, and became, all at once, the fast friend of the church. Through Constantine he consummated the adulterous union of church and State (which is but another term for a union of the church and the world,) and thus by his intimacy with the church he accomplishes what he never could have attained by his opposition. In his foul embrace piety sickened and died, and for ages he was triumphant, a dark cloud resting on the prospects of the church. At the Reformation, however, she burst forth with renewed splendor, and she has continued to increase in glory and strength ever since. Still the devil is her great enemy. He still continues to make mighty efforts to oppose God and to ruin man, and will so continue till the time of his incarceration shall arrive. Having dwelt, at some length, upon the object of Satan's efforts as developed by his operations, we will now enquire,

### III. *What are the best means of foiling these efforts?*

All who have sanctioned our arguments and statements thus far, will readily admit that it is important, nay, essential, that we should know how to defeat the efforts of a being thus powerful and thus malicious. Fortunately, or rather mercifully for us, ample information is furnished in the scripture on this subject. The sacred writers, aware of the power and malice of the wicked one, have not failed to sup-

ply the information necessary to oppose and defeat him. The apostle James says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you;"\* and Peter, still alluding to the wicked one, gives the same counsel in the next verse to our text, when he says, "Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."† But the sacred writers do not content themselves with such general directions on this important subject, but they give the most minute and explicit instructions as to the means and instruments which may be successfully used against our great adversary. Hear Peter in the commencement of the verse, a portion of which constitutes the text, "*Be sober, be vigilant*, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Here sobriety and vigilance are inculcated, because the writer knew well that our passions and appetites, when not properly restrained, are powerful aids to the influence of the devil. He knew that when the rein is thrown on the neck of the lusts, when the passions are inflamed and excited, *then* the devil directs them to his own vile purposes. He knew that when the christian intermits that "eternal vigilance" which is not only the "price of liberty," but the price of heaven itself, *then* the devil enters his heart and mars his happiness and usefulness.

But the apostle Paul is still more minute and explicit in his directions on the subject. Hear his striking description of the christian warrior's armor. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."‡ Here we are furnished with the most ample directions. Here nothing is forgotten. Every exigency is here provided for, and while

\* James iv: 7.

† 1 Pet. v: 9.



every kind of protective armor is supplied, offensive weapons are not omitted. The girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sandals of the gospel, and the sword of the Spirit, are *all* here recommended to the christian. But we should remember that all these are made subordinate to that great means of protection and defence which is urged upon us in almost every sentiment of the gospel, and upon which they all depend. We mean *Christ as our help and strength*. Christ, and Christ alone, has conquered death, hell and sin. The devil, indeed, thought, as we have remarked, that his purposes were accomplished when he led Christ to the cross; but *He* knew that even then he was triumphant. *He* knew that the great battle had been fought and won, and he proclaimed the victory when he shouted in the agonies of death, "*it is finished*," and it is only by sharing in *that* victory that we might hope to conquer.

Brethren in the ministry, this fearful being is peculiarly *our* enemy. While he hates all men, he hates the faithful minister of Christ with an intensity of passion which none but a fiend can feel. Such a minister occupies a conspicuous place. He is a watchman *on* the walls of Zion, not within those walls. He is a subordinate officer under the great Captain of our salvation. He presents a shining mark for the envenomed shaft of the adversary. His reputation, his peace of mind, his usefulness, are all fortresses, any one of which, if carried by the enemy, must bring loss to the cause of Christ and gain to the adversary. How necessary, then, my brethren, that we should be ever prepared for the attacks of our wily, malicious and powerful foe! How essential that we should heed the admonition of our great commander, to "watch and pray!" How important that we should take to ourselves the whole armor of God, and having taken that armor, that we should use it constantly and effectively!

I have in this discourse, my brethren (and here I address all who love the Lord Jesus,) endeavored to open to your view the vast power and influence of the devil, and the object of his efforts, and to point out the means of foiling those efforts. A serious contemplation of this subject is calculated to produce a deep impression on our minds. Still there is no occasion for alarm or apprehension on our part. Great

as are the influence, power and resources of the devil, God's power and resources are greater still. Numerous and powerful as are our enemies, our friends are still more numerous and powerful. They that be for us are more than they that be against us. Good men fight for us by their prayers, angels are commissioned to minister to our welfare, and to watch over our pathway, and above all, God himself is our friend; and "if God be for us, *who* can be against us?" But let us remember it is only at the side of Jesus we find these friends; that it is only under the blood-stained banner of the cross we can hope to conquer; those who fight under other colors can hope for no aid from heaven. How solicitous should we be, my brethren, to conquer our great enemy! How agonizingly anxious to obtain the friends, and the aid of which we have been speaking! Oh, how should we toil, and pray, and watch, and strive, that we may be enabled at last "to come off more than conquerors through him that loved us."

But there are some here who are the acknowledged slaves of the fearful being of whom we have been speaking. Some who "are led captive by the devil at his will." Some who are working *his* will and *their own* destruction. Do *you* expect, my friends, to be favored by this great enemy of man? Are you exempt from his influence and his malice? No! He is your enemy as well as ours. He seeks your destruction as well as ours. You have to contend with him as well as we. Are you prepared for the contest? Are you ready for the fearful fight? No! You have no armor, no leader, no friend! He has thrown around you a cord to which he, day by day, adds a thread, and with this he is separating you farther and farther from your religious friends and acquaintances; from God and from heaven; and is dragging you nearer and nearer to the bottomless pit. Oh burst these bands while you may. Fly for refuge to the hope set before you. Enlist in the service of Christ. Secure his aid while opportunity is afforded you, for he is mighty to save, and he will give protection, and strength, and peace here, and joy unspeakable hereafter, world without end. Amen.

NOTE.—Some of the sentiments contained in this sermon, from the character of the subject, do not admit of positive proof. Its leading thoughts, however, are unquestionably true; and *all* it contains are at least probable.

THE AUTHOR.

## CRITICISM.

In a letter lately received from a distinguished brother in the South, he says: "How came you to commit such a blunder in your note upon the Funeral Sermon of Elder Broaddus? Commenting on the last sermon of our eminent brother, in Richmond, you say, 'a million of persons might have been present, all taking different views of the text, not one the same taken by him, and yet his was the correct one.' Pray was the text so obscure that only one in a million could understand it?"

One of the greatest trials in the management of this paper is, that all our editorials are necessarily composed in great haste. We never know until the moment it is called for, how much space is to be filled, and what is therefore to be written. And when we have written, half may be omitted, or as much more may be necessary, which always must affect the force and propriety, if not the sense, of what we write.

But in this case we are not so certain, with all due deference to the superior judgment of our esteemed brother, that we are not correct: and we therefore defend our position. Our correspondent has misquoted us, from which we infer that he has misunderstood us. Our words were as follows: "It was our happiness to hear his last sermon a few weeks before his death." And the criticism we made upon it, as we left the pulpit, was, "probably if a million of men were to study that text, no one of them would have just the same conception of it as Andrew Broaddus. And yet I know his is the right one, and wonder why all men should not have had it."

In the first place, it is no argument against the plainness of a thing itself, that a million, or even millions, do not comprehend it. The whole population of Paris may be illuminated and amused by the brilliancy of a light, the philosophy of which is understood by those only who are acquainted with the principles of heat and the laws of combustion. On almost all subjects, opinions are as various as are the countenances of men.

But what is of infinitely more consequence is, that such is the grace of the gospel, that the enjoyment of its blessings has no necessary connection with perfect conceptions of all the allusions by which its truths are illustrated, or the

arguments by which its principles are sustained. This glorious system is, in one view of it, only a higher application, and an inconceivable extension, of that same benevolence, which shines so conspicuously in nature and providence. To share the benefits of either or of all, is not made to depend upon talent or merit. Appetite, digestion and nutrition, are enjoyed in common by the physiologist and the chemist, and their less cultivated neighbors. Observance of the phenomena of mind is not essential to hope and faith. And woe betide us if the laws of gravitation and attraction were to require the study of them, in order to the enjoyment of their advantages.

Doubtless the scholar, other things being equal, has the advantage of the unlettered man, in the perusal of the Bible. And yet what we call learning and science are so often blended with pride and presumption, that their value is abridged if not cancelled by possession. Hence religion, with its pleasures, and its rewards, is made to depend rather upon the heart than the intellect. No argument, however, is thence deducible to the detriment of matters appertaining to the understanding and the taste in religion, or in other things. On the contrary, our views of the divine goodness ought to be elevated by such amazing revelations. That the child and the philosopher, the scholar and the clown, stand precisely on the same level in the moral relations they sustain to God, and their capability to enjoy the divine favor and the happiness it brings, is among the great glories of the gospel of Christ.

Or take an illustration and an argument from a source the same with that now under discussion. We doubt whether there had ever been, until within a few years ago, a book affording a correct view of that famous text, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." There might have been some such book or books, but we had never seen them, nor heard of their contents. On the mind of John, in the letters of David and John,\* what appears to have been the true light, seems so to have flashed,

\*These letters, if we remember right, were written by Rev. David Jones and Rev. John L. Dagg, then both of Pennsylvania, of whom the former has gone to his reward, and the latter is now President of Mercer University in Georgia.



that whoever reads what he has written, will feel assured that he gives precisely the meaning the Apostle intended to convey. And it may not be amiss to remark, that according to his interpretation, this passage, if no other does, affords an argument against Infant Baptism: inasmuch as it places the parental and filial connections in the same relation to the ecclesiastical, as it does the conjugal. If the christian husband or wife must disown the idolatrous partner as unfit for the conjugal relation, for the same reason the unbelieving child is no longer a child, nor the unbelieving parent any longer a parent. In other words, if our Pede-baptist friends admit children on the faith of their parents, they ought also to admit wives on the faith of their husbands.

ED.

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#### FREE-MASON STREET CHURCH, NORFOLK, VA.

The period of our State Anniversaries, held this year in Hampton, only about twenty miles from Norfolk, but brought into immediate proximity by the constant passage of steamers, was a happy selection for the opening of this new and beautiful edifice for the worship of God. While it furnished the church with its choice of such assistance as its members might desire, an opportunity was thus afforded for the gratification of many persons who could not otherwise have been present on that interesting occasion. Among these was our humble self.

One of the large party of some two or three hundred passengers on board the Curtis Peck from Richmond, on Thursday the thirtieth ultimo, we remained with those who, after landing all who chose to stop at Hampton, proceeded to Norfolk to be present at the dedication that evening.

Understanding from Deacon Salisbury, whose hospitality we enjoyed, that the church would be opened at seven precisely, one hour before the commencement of the services, we in cog. repaired to the spot in due time to witness every thing. Our seat was eligible: and if we except the worthy pastor of that church, our beloved and highly gifted young brother, Rev. Tiberius Graccus Jones, perhaps not an individual of that numerous throng felt a deeper interest in the occurrences of the evening than did we.

Ten thousand recollections crowded and bewildered our brain, excited almost to intoxication. The spot itself had been the play-ground of our boyish days—within a few rods of it we were born, born again, baptized, licensed and ordained to the ministry. Of the church of which this is the daughter, and of whose members very few survive, we were one in the original constitution—and here were our first essays in the ministry of the word and in public prayer. Full well knew we that hundreds present would have welcomed us to their hearts and their homes, but having only a single evening to pass in the old borough, we chose to realize how an old man would feel when suddenly thrown, after a lapse of a third of a century, into the midst of a countless throng, only a single individual of whom, and that a non-resident lady, seemed to recognize him. The first seated on that side of the aisle, and the last to leave it, our reflections, as our observation, had ample scope for every emotion conceivable, between the widest extremes of rejoicing and of sadness.

The tones of the organ were mellifluous and strong. The gas light was brilliant. The commodiousness, the elegance, the dimensions, the architecture, and the finish, of the building were attractive; the attention of the audience fixed; and the services imposing and impressive.

Already had we silently offered on the altar of our own heart, immediately upon our entrance within the walls about to be sanctified to the service of God, as perhaps hundreds of others had also done, our own dedicatory prayer:—

“O thou whose presence filleth immensity, but who in a peculiar manner dwellest in the hearts of thy people and in the assemblies of thy saints, and revealest thyself wherever thy name is recorded. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. Graciously accept this house, built by means of wealth bestowed upon thy servants by thyself, whose are the silver, and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Here may the thunders of thy law awaken transgressors to repentance; and the consolations of the cross win them to the empire of thy Son. Before the pastor of this flock, may all his enemies fall as Dagon before the ark, and the giant of Gath before the shepherd of Israel. Bless thy word and thine ordinances, to the promotion of thine own cause.

From between the cherubim shine forth. Within these walls may generations yet unborn, be born again. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon them, and establish thou the work of their hands upon them, yea, the work of their hands establish thou it; for thine are the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen."

In the offering of the dedicatory prayer, by Dr. Howell, there seemed to be a fitness amounting almost to preternatural. He appeared to have returned after an absence of sixteen years in Nashville, Tennessee, as if for the very purpose of imploring the blessing of God on the labors of those very men whom, in their boyhood, he had baptized and welcomed into Cumberland Street Church, of which he was at that time pastor. And although the sermon of Dr. Fuller was considered by some of his warmest admirers as almost a failure, we could not help feeling as we sometimes used to do in the so-called failures of the late Andrew Broaddus, that he succeeds better when he fails than the mass of even talented men do in their greatest success. We use no hyperbole when we say that had Dr. Fuller not preached, but simply read the portion of scripture connected with his text, we, individually, should have considered ourselves amply rewarded for the time and expense of our trip. Never before had we seen so much of beauty in that text, nor indeed of its true meaning, "We determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." At Christ there ought to be, if not a colon, a semi-colon; and at him, if not a comma, a semi-comma. Even HIM, I do not preach, except crucified. It is not even Christ: prophesied, promised, incarnated, rising from the dead, victorious over all his and our enemies, ascending to heaven, reigning or judging the world, but crucified, that we preach.

The text was "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God;" and the sermon was a lucid exposition and powerful enforcement of those two great positions, antithetic to the *weakness* charged upon the gospel by the Jews, who claimed *power* for the Mosaic dispensation only, and *folly* by the Greeks, who could not comprehend how all nations could be saved by the death of a supposed Malefactor. We hope to obtain the sermon for publication in the Preacher.



## THE LATE VIRGINIA BAPTIST ANNIVERSARIES.

Among the many advantages of a long life, is this: that it affords an opportunity to correct erroneous decisions of our judgment, made in our earlier years. Until this year, we had pertinaciously maintained the opinion, that these meetings should always be held in the same place, and that place be Richmond. The Anniversaries of all the other religious denominations are migratory: but their ecclesiastical polity is so different from ours, that no inference can be made from one to the other. Between a Presbyterian Assembly, or a Methodist Conference, and a Baptist Association or Convention, there is scarcely one single point of similarity. The financial superiority of Richmond for such purposes, arises out of its local position, and its multitudinous relations. Not only is it accessible from every point, but it has attractions for every class of the community, from the belle who wishes to see the latest fashion, to the man of business, who combines his delegation with the sale of his tobacco. We perfectly understand the whole argument, pro. and con.; and we are utterly free from all prejudices and predilections: but with us one argument was sufficient. It was, that it required years of subsequent effort, after a change to any other place, to bring up the receipts to the point they had attained by holding the meetings in Richmond, and from which they had fallen by the removal. But the results of this meeting will show, that we cannot have sustained any detriment by going to Hampton. Not only were the meetings largely attended—comfortably and even elegantly entertained—harmoniously, happily, and efficiently conducted—but the receipts will, we hope, tell no financial loss. On the score of mere gratification, we heard a gentleman from the upper country say, that hereafter he will make his annual summer visit, not to the springs, but to Hampton.

Between these anniversaries and the entire benevolent operations of the denomination within the State, and the aid also afforded by it to those beyond the State, there is an intimate connection. They are at once an exponent, indicating the result of plans and efforts for the preceding year or years; and a propelling power, originating and guiding the influences which are to avail through the prospective year and even future years. Every attendant seems to return with a sort of embodiment in himself, of the whole



Foreign and Domestic Mission Enterprise, involving as it does the Bible, education, tract, Sunday school, publication and colporteur energies of the denomination in the State.

Doubtless the whole scene of such a series of meetings, held from day to day for a week, presents to a beholder, of our years and infirmities, objects of contemplation quite different from those of the great mass. Many are there to speak; more to hear. For the former we are incompetent beyond a conversation tone; excess of the latter excites us beyond endurance. But to witness the venerable looks of the Montagues and the Todds of the past generation, still in attendance at those meetings; and to anticipate the unobtrusive promise of the Huntingtons and Browns, of whom we had not a few in attendance, sent a thrill of joy to the heart of one, who, although he belongs to both, is compelled on some accounts to feel, that he is properly neither of the present generation nor of the past.

This meeting would have perfectly convinced us, had we needed to be convinced, that as a denomination, we have among ourselves, in Virginia, without going abroad for persons or things, all the elements of our own present and future denominational greatness and usefulness. From those who, a few years ago, were mere school boys, we listened to enchanting eloquence, sound theology, and the suggestions of profound and discriminating thought. We seriously fear our churches do not know what treasures they possess. We miss the Straughans, and Semples, and Broadduses, of by-gone years; and we think of the absent Baptists, and Daggs, and Jeters, whose presence once cheered our hearts and strengthened our hands; but we still possess invaluable treasures. It may perhaps be true, that we have not a surviving genius as Andrew Broaddus among us: but in this we stand on a level with the other sects. If we want professors and presidents for our colleges, here they are. If we want faithful, talented, devoted, laborious pastors, missionaries and evangelists, here they are. All we need is, with the blessing of God, the marshalling of our forces, and going forth to the rencounter, for the conquest of error and the triumph of truth.

ED.

## PARENTAL INJUSTICE.

It is less difficult to make a fortune, than to retain it when made. The truth of this proposition may be fairly inferred from the fact, that scarcely one in a thousand who begins life rich does not die poor, whereas almost every man who dies rich, began the world with little or nothing.

He who earns a fortune is more competent to take care of it, other things being equal, than he who has received one by inheritance. The single fact that he has earned it, proves his application and skill; and his capability has constantly increased by that habit and experience of which the youth entering life rich, can have no conception.

Both of the foregoing propositions are, if we mistake not, demonstrable, by that sort of argument, which appertains to this class of propositions: and they both furnish wide fields for thought and inquiry.

If we assume them both to be true, and then put them together, we have a mirror which reveals great moral deformity in the whole community. There is not perhaps one man in one hundred thousand, who would not be glad to know that, when he dies, he will leave his children rich. In other words, gladly would he impose upon them the heavier burden of preserving, than the lighter of making, a fortune; while at the same time he would leave them in circumstances least favorable either for earning or keeping it.

If facts are worth any thing, they show, that of two elder sons, the one left to manage a princely estate for his mother and the younger children; and the other, although poor, to support a bereaved and penniless family; the latter is apter to die rich. If he who by long and patient industry and economy has acquired a fortune, finds it difficult to retain it, in what perplexity must he be, who, ignorant of both toil and economy, has to perform the onerous task of keeping one? Yet this is precisely the condition, to place our children in which, we sacrifice health, usefulness, peace and religious comfort.

ED.

# THE BAPTIST PREACHER.

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## THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH.

A Sermon by REV. RICHARD FULLER, D. D., preached the fourth Lord's day in May, 1850, at County Line Church, in Caroline County, Va., occasioned by the death of MRS. NANCY WALLER COLEMAN, a member of that Church.

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“*The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*—1 COR. xv : 26.

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Our apostle finishes this chapter with a very strange question. “*O death,*” he exclaims, “*where is thy sting?—O grave where is thy victory?*” In some unfallen planet whose bowers death had never entered, and from the lips of some holy dweller there, this language would create no astonishment. But what a question to be uttered here; here on an earth all over which, look where we will, we see the human race smitten by the sting of Death, we behold the Grave exulting in its trophies.

You know, however, that in war it is of little consequence who wins the first skirmish, or gains the first advantage. The great point is the ultimate triumph. And it was in view of this triumph, that Death and the Grave were thus accosted. The apostle overlooked, he could not see their petty successes, as the final consummation rose before his raptured vision. That prospect absorbs and transports his soul, and it is in the sublime anticipations of faith, that the cry bursts from him, “*O Death where is thy sting, O Grave where is thy victory! Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

In our text, the same martial imagery is employed; and, entering at once into the matter, I wish to speak, first of Death as an enemy, and then of the destruction of that enemy. After having thus elucidated the text, I shall make some remarks on the character of the esteemed christian lady whose memory we all love to honor.

I am to speak of Death as an enemy, and the topic is very important. We ministers too often, I fear, declaim about Death as if it were in itself desirable; and christians are sometimes tempted to doubt their piety, because the grave is to them dark and revolting. Now all this is wrong. Death is not, in itself; Death cannot be, in itself; lovely. Death is our enemy. The Bible constantly so represents him, and we all feel the truth and emphasis of that representation. No sooner had man sinned, than Death entered into the world, and, ever since his entrance, he has waged an unremitted, internecine war against our race.

In enlarging a little on this article, the first observation which strikes me is this: that the enmity of Death is an *undiscriminating enmity*. It is enmity against man, as man, and because he is man. It is not hostility to some, but to all; and wherever our nature is diffused, there this enmity is also diffused.

A Dervise,—so runs the Eastern legend—being overtaken by night, while on a journey, entered the palace of a king, and, mistaking it for an inn, he lay down and went to sleep. The guards arrested him, and carried him into the royal presence, when the monarch demanded the cause of this unheard of intrusion. “Sire,” said our Dervise, “may I ask who dwelt within these walls before your majesty?” “My father,” replied the prince. “And who before your father?” “His father.” “Who before him?” “His father.” “Who before him?” “A long succession of illustrious ancestors.” “Ah then,” said the Dervise, “after all, I am right, I have made no mistake, for a house which has so often changed its inhabitants, is not a palace, it is an inn.” My friends, adopting the martial imagery of the text, I make a similar reflection as to our houses, our cities, the whole earth. We call these houses our dwellings. In these cities, and upon this earth, we build, and plant, and scheme, and laugh, and pursue wealth, and honor and pleasure. But what are these houses? what are these cities? what is the



whole earth? All, all is but the scene of a deadly war; a battle field where we are awaiting our foe, and where, like all our forefathers, we must feel the stroke of Death, and be crushed before his power. "O Death, *where* is thy sting! O Grave *where* is thy victory!" Alas! *where are they not?* And in what piercing tones does the answer come back, stand where we may upon the earth and utter that question, The sting of death is *here!* The victory of the grave is *everywhere!*

Death is an indiscriminating enemy. It is true that in a peculiar sense he is the enemy of the impenitent. But he is an enemy to the christian, an enemy to all our race, and this in several ways.

Death is an enemy to all the family of Adam, because he wages war against the body, pursuing that until he tears it from the soul, and tramples it in the dust. Nor does his hostility cease there. Other enemies stop at the grave, but not this enemy. The coffin, the grave, cannot protect the body from him. He exults in mangling the form he has seized; converting into a mass of putrefaction, that wonderful frame-work whose beauty and glory far transcend all structures ever raised by human skill; defacing it, corrupting it, feeding worms with it; and, at length, reducing it to dust and ashes.

Again, Death is an enemy to all mankind, because he assails the heart; bruising that with the most cruel strokes, severing at a blow the tenderest ties, wrenching from our embrace the most cherished objects, and spreading gloom and desolation where all had been peace and love and joy. Now causing Joseph to mourn for his father with a lamentation so grievous, that the inhabitants of the land called the place Abel-mizraim. Now stretching David, all pale and haggard, on his face, as he cries "O my son, my son, would God I had died for thee." Now hurrying Lazarus to the tomb, and pouring into that tomb floods of tears, wrung out from the souls of those sweet sisters, mingled with the tears of the Son of God himself. And now smiting Rachel with a bereavement which leaves her utterly disconsolate; converting the whole earth into a sepulchre, where her heart sits a lone mourner, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not.

In short, my brethren, Death is an enemy even to the soul, the soul of the christian. Immortal though it be, and defying Death in the very jaws of the grave, yet the christian's soul is made to feel the hostility of this foe. The happiness of the soul will be incomplete, even in Paradise, until it be reunited with the body. But Death detains that body. Death despoils and insults that body. And thus, in heaven itself, and by glorified spirits, is felt, and until the resurrection will be constantly felt, with an intensity which we cannot comprehend, all the energy of the truth, that Death is the enemy, the indiscriminating enemy of man.

But Death is not only an indiscriminating enemy, he is also a most formidable enemy. He is invested with every attribute which can make him terrible. "*Art thou a King then?*" Such was the language of Pilate to Jesus; and I am not surprised at it. "*Thou*, thou, not only throneless and crownless, but thus weak, and insulted, and despised, and spit upon, art *thou* a king?" No one will ever put such a question to Death. He is not only a king, but a king crowned with most terrific majesty. He is, says Job, "*The king of terrors*;" and, as he rides through the earth, and tramples the nations under the hoofs of that terrible pale horse, all fall down and acknowledge his dreadful sovereignty.

In proof of the formidableness of this foe, there is one fact which, of itself, is conclusive. It is the fear he universally and instinctively inspires. I know there are those who affect to be superior to these apprehensions, and who do brave death. But who are they? Even supposing that these men do not conceal, beneath this exterior intrepidity, hearts which quail and blench, yet who are they? They are fools and madmen who know not, think not, what death is, but drive on, undheeding and unrecking whither. With those who think, death always inspires solemnity and awe. The truth is, that all fearful things, the wreck, the storm, the lightning, the plague, borrow their fearfulness from death; and no earthly station, no banded numbers, can arm men against the dread which this arch enemy creates. At his tokens cities tremble and clothe themselves in sackcloth. At his approach the proudest monarchs, the Pharaohs and Belshazzars, who had impiously spurned at God, and insultingly exclaimed, Who is the Lord? these

superb monarchs grow pale; their joints are loosened; their knees smite together; and they utter cries of consternation. Indeed, such is the instinctive alarm everywhere excited by Death, that the Bible uses singular language. It describes the whole population of the globe as under a deplorable bondage to Satan through this fear; and pronounces it one of the most signal displays of the efficacy of the cross, that it rescues men from this bondage. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."

Yes, my friends, we must all confess the fear with which Death strikes us. And let me say, that this is a reasonable fear. In every view, and for many reasons, Death is a most formidable foe.

Does power, for example, render an enemy formidable? How formidable, then, is death! Who can escape, who resist him? Princes, heroes, all earthly might and power, crumble at his touch. The Alexanders, the Cæsars, the Napoleons—those splendid sinners who have filled the earth with their fame—where are they? I read, in one chapter of history, about the resistlessness of their arms, and how, wherever they marched, their mailed heels were on the necks of crouching monarchs and prostrate empires. I read on. I turn over a leaf, and in the next chapter I find these invincible conquerors discomfited and utterly destroyed by Death. To their memories nations erect splendid mausoleums, covered with pompous inscriptions. I enter those mausoleums. I lift up the lids of those emblazoned coffins,—my God, how does Death spurn these men! How does he mock to utter scorn, all that vaulting ambition which towered, and chafed, and deemed the whole earth too small for its grasp.

Does cruelty make an enemy formidable? How formidable is Death! The fiercest and sternest foes have sometimes been accessible to pity; but Death is inexorable. Tears, and groans, and lamentations move him not. The wife, the mother, the whole family, may rend the air with their cries; he heeds them not. He smites without pity or reprieve. He seems to envy us the possession of the beau-

tiful and lovely things of earth; he seizes them, and strikes them with a sudden blow, and immolates them to his wrath.

If we consider the forces and agencies which Death musters in battle array, and with which he devastates the earth, how terrible an enemy is he! The winds, the waves, the elements, obey him. Scorching pains, wasting diseases, war, fire, pestilence, famine, lightning, hurricane, earthquake—these are his hosts. These all hear and obey his voice, and scourge and scathe at his command.

If we consider the ravages which have, in all ages, marked the progress of death, what an enemy is he! Other invaders—what traces do they leave behind them? They spoil temples and cities. Smoking edifices and blackened wastes are in their path. They destroy only wood, and brick, and stone, the work of men's hands. The desolation which Death leaves, is very different. Where he marches, his course is strewn with the wreck of things which men cannot make. He mars the beauty and glory of man himself, and leaves in ruins the work of God's own hand. Warriors and conquerors have ever prided themselves on the spoils they have ravished from their foes. With these spoils they have loved to build triumphal arches and columns, carving upon them the story of their imperishable deeds. Suppose Death were thus to commemorate his conquests; where would space be found for the monument he would rear? In what language could his victories be recorded!

In a word, my hearers, the execution which Death is commissioned to inflict, the vengeance to which Death consigns the soul unless it be rescued, think of this. It is this which invests Death with his greatest terror. "I looked," says John, "and beheld a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, *and hell followed with him.*" Such was the gloomy retinue which John saw; and it is that retinue; it is hell which follows Death; it is the second Death; it is, that after Death is the judgment, and that after judgment there is for the impenitent only weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, an infinity of pain, an immortality of tears. O! it is this which makes Death supremely dreadful. This crowns him with most dismal sovereignty. This places him on his frightful pre-eminence, and asserts, and establishes indisputably, his title as the King of Terrors.



You see, then, that Death is an indiscriminating and a most formidable enemy. I will make only one other remark here. It is, that Death is "the last enemy." And let us not pass this truth lightly, for it is full of meaning, full of instruction to us all.

My impenitent hearers, this truth is for you. You may vanquish many foes, and escape many dangers, but recollect these are only skirmishes. The last enemy is still before you, and him you must meet. There, in a field chosen by himself, he awaits you. As he towers there, in hideous grandeur, the whole valley is darkened by his bleak shadow; and into that "valley of the shadow of Death" you must enter, and grapple with him there.

No wisdom, no stratagem, can avert your encounter with this last enemy; and think what must be the issue of that conflict if you meet him alone. The christian, weak in himself, meets this grim giant in the strength of the Lord God, and triumphs. Out of this valley he emerges, and he is "still praising thee," O my God! Still, as he mounts up, his is the death-song of Death himself; his shout is, "Blessed be God who teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight." "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph."

But you, my impenitent hearers, what will become of you in that last battle? If without the christian's hope, which is his helmet; if without the christian's faith, which is his shield; if without the christian's conscious loyalty to truth, which is his sword; in short, if without Christ, through whom the christian conquers, how terrible will be that day to you; how inevitable, how irremediable, your destruction.

Yes, my impenitent hearers, this truth is for you. And it is for you, too, christians. For you, how full of consolation is the assurance, that Death is the last enemy! Now your life is a succession of conflicts. Now how many foes, how many "fears within and fightings without!" Still, while life lasts, the war lasts. The cry still is, Fight on! Fight the good fight of faith! Quit you like men! "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

But thus it shall not always be. Soon the last enemy

shall be vanquished, the last battle be won, and then all shall be serenity and joy forever. Death is the last enemy who shall awaken your fears, or try your constancy, or disturb the tranquility of your redeemed spirit. This foe subdued, a boundless horizon will spread on every side. Like Israel, you will look back and see your enemies sunk like lead in the mighty waters. With this difference, however, Israel had yet before them many a weary march; many a desperate strife; while, for you, the whole field will have been won; there will remain only the long, long repose, the peace, the gratulations, the trophies, and rewards of everlasting victory.

Up to this point I have spoken of Death as an enemy. I pass now to our other topic, in which I would speak of the destruction of this enemy by Christ. In other words, I would show how the Captain of salvation hath already disarmed this foe of his chief terror, so that he is said to have "abolished death;" and how, one day, Death shall be utterly destroyed, and "Death and hell be cast into the lake that burneth."

Now, in order to elucidate this part of our subject, let me recall the remarks I have already made, that it is Sin which has given Death his power. And let me remind you of the ample atonement made for sin in the death of Christ.

In another portion of this chapter a very dismal image is introduced. Sin is declared to be "the sting of Death;" and what a thought this—what a truth for those who trifle with Sin! I have before observed, that all the terrible things of earth derive their terror from Death; but whence does Death derive his terror? It is (O God, with what justice hast thou pronounced them fools who mock at sin!) from Sin. It is Sin which arms Death with its sharpness and bitterness.

"The sting of Death is sin." All which is terrible, then, in the death of the body is the fruit of Sin. It is Sin which consumes our frames. It is Sin which palsies our limbs. It is Sin which loosens our joints, and dims our eyes, and stretches us all pale and gasping on beds of wasting disease. Every pang, every throe, every convulsion, is the work of Sin. Every shroud is woven, every coffin is shaped, every grave is dug, by Sin. Sin snatches our parents, our children, from us, and drags them to the tomb; and Sin strikes

us, and hurries us away after them. Ah Sin, how dreadful is thy work—how ghastly the laurels with which thou art crowned!

This is not the worst. Not only has temporal death passed upon all because all have sinned; not only is the “body dead because of sin;” but the sting of Death has reached the soul, and spread its venom there.

“The sting of Death is sin.” Death is pre-eminently the King of Terrors, because he is the executioner of Divine justice. But now, the death of Christ hath satisfied Divine justice. For all who are his, Jesus hath disarmed Death of this sting; he hath discrowned and spoiled Death of this terror.

When our apostle says that the sting of Death is sin, what does he mean by the word “sting?” He means the penalty due to sin. But Jesus hath paid that penalty. Stooping to earth, the “Brightness of the Father’s glory” threw himself between us and Death, and, receiving the monster’s sting in his own heart, he exhausted its venom and rendered it harmless.

Again—when it is said that the sting of Death is Sin, what is meant by the word “sting?” It is the corruption of sin. But Jesus delivers us from this corruption. He breaks the power of sin. The Holy Spirit quickens those who were dead in trespasses and sins, infuses new life and vigor, and fills the soul with holy and heavenly aspirations.

And though Death is still the enemy of the christian, he is a vanquished enemy. Looking to the cross, the believer’s faith rises above the fear of Death, and triumphs over the grave. The sacrifices which Death exacts no longer terrify him; for “He who spared not his own Son,” will he require any sacrifice which is not for the christian’s good? Languor, pain, disease, no longer appal him; for they are all from the hand of the tenderest of fathers. In a word, the christian no more revolts at the darkness and gloominess of the tomb. That tomb is a part of Christ’s empire. That grave is no longer a dismal prison, but a pavilion where the weary form lies down to rest; where those who die in the Lord are sweetly said to “sleep in Jesus.”

The death of Christ, then—that death at which the enemies of God exulted as a triumph—was the first act by which the power of Death was broken. Let us now, glance

at the next achievement of the Redeemer; I mean his resurrection. By this act another blow was struck which resounded through all the dominions of Death; which shook and sapped all his empire, and prepared the way for his entire destruction.

Dying, entering the tomb, Jesus invaded Death's kingdom, and grappled with him in his own territories. Had he not returned, had Death detained him captive, that victory had been fatal to all our hopes. For "if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." But he did return. The Lord is risen. "*It was not possible for him to be holden by Death.*" Princes, and potentates, and heroes, Death had seized, and, in his grasp, they mouldered away to common dust. But it was not possible that the Saviour should be holden. By his almighty power he "loosed the pains of Death." At his touch, all the cords were broken, all the withes became as "a thread of tow when it toucheth the fire." Yes, he arose, he baffled all the might of Death. Again, upon that earth where he had bled, he appeared a mighty conqueror. And standing there, over his rifled grave, he exclaimed, "O Death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction! I have met thee and broken thy strength. I will, one day, complete my victory, and annihilate forever thy power."

I will only add that this complete triumph, this consummation of Death's overthrow, will be at the final resurrection. Until that day, the mediatorial sovereignty will not be fully vindicated. "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." But until the resurrection one enemy will not be put under his feet; one mighty rival will dispute his supremacy, and still boast in his trophies.

On that glorious day this boast shall cease. On the morning of the resurrection, (an era so sublime that the apostle represents all creation, animate and inanimate, as if heaving with emotion in anticipation of it,) the last triumph shall be achieved, the last enemy shall be destroyed. The trumpet shall proclaim the whole field forever won. The same voice which once said, "Lazarus come forth," shall, then, reverberate through the profoundest depths of the earth and the sea; and the earth and the sea shall give up their dead. Every vestige of Death's empire shall then be abolished. "For, for this cause he both died; and rose, and revived,



that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." Such was the august enterprise undertaken by the Redeemer, and it shall then be fully accomplished. A mighty angel shall set one foot upon the land, and another upon the sea, and shall swear by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, that there shall be death no longer. Everywhere the sky shall be lined with archangels shouting, "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*" The bodies of the saints, shall not only be raised, but be raised incorruptible. "This corruptible shall put on incorruption; this mortal shall put on immortality." And thus raised—thus clothed in immortal effulgence—glorified bodies enshrining glorified souls—the redeemed shall ascend—mounting, riding in resplendent beauty—with admiring angels as their convoy; "and so shall they be forever with the Lord."

In finishing this commentary on the text, there is a single reflection which I would make. I refer to the certain and sublime triumph of the Redeemer. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Had I time, how delightful would it be to dwell upon this truth. Men and brethren, the mediatorial throne of Jesus is no unsubstantial fabric like those of earthly sovereigns; it is founded on truth and righteousness, and is therefore imperishable. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Such is the august language in which the Eternal Father addresses the Prince of peace, that Saviour who in the realms of glory sits crowned with celestial majesty, and before whose resistless sceptre all the might of earth and hell shall be shivered.

It is not, however, of his other conquests, that the text speaks; it is of his victory over Death. And in contemplating this, what shall I say to those now before me? Christians, what shall I say to you? In commencing this sermon I noticed that language of our Apostle, "O death where is thy sting? O Grave where is thy victory?" And I regarded it as a question. But I was mistaken. It is not a question. It is a great deal more than a question. It is a *challenge*. It is a *defiance*. It is an *insult* to death. The apostle was soon to meet this enemy; soon was he to feel his cold embrace, and to sink in that last struggle. But his faith heeds not—sees not—this ephemeral defeat. The triumph of Jesus was the apostle's triumph; and, in anticipation of that victory, he hurls his defiance at Death.

Nor was this noble intrepidity peculiar to the apostle. The victory of the Redeemer is the victory of all his people. When he conquered, they conquered. And every christian can say, "Thanks be unto God which giveth *me* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Nature, it is true, shudders at the harbingers of Death. But faith stills these alarms. Faith says, "all things are yours, whether life, or death;" and, in these harbingers, sees only the preparations for the release of the soul from the bondage of corruption.

The shroud, the coffin, the funeral train, are, to our eyes, a doleful spectacle. We clothe ourselves in weeds, and follow in tears. But faith cleaves the clouds of mortality, and pursues the emancipated spirit to the bosom of its God. In this gloomy procession, faith sees only the funeral of the body of death, the burial of the christian's sins, infirmities, temptations and miseries.

In a word, the state to which Death reduces the body, the tribunal to which Death hurries the soul, what can reason, what can philosophy do, to console us in prospect of these? But faith can do what reason and philosophy cannot. Faith can look into the grave and say, "Thy brother shall rise again." This brother, this child, this mother, shall arise, shall shake off the dust of death, and emerge in the same body, only fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. Faith can anticipate that tribunal, and joyfully exclaim, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

While for the christian there is so much of consolation and joy in our subject, how solemn its admonitions to the rest of this audience. My impenitent hearers, whoever you be, and whatever your career in life, let me beg you to recollect that before you is the last enemy, and meet him you must. "It is appointed unto men once to die." You have an appointment with Death, which you must keep; and every step you take brings you nearer and nearer to the last meeting. Young man, treading the earth with a step so elastic, where art thou striding? To meet Death. Old people, bent with age, and loaded with infirmities, where are ye crawling? To meet Death. Ye rich, where are ye driving in sump-

tuous equipages? To meet Death. Ye poor, where are ye walking barefoot and in rags? To meet Death. All, all, the whole population of this earth, where are all going? To meet Death. "It is appointed unto men once to die." This is God's appointment, and it can neither be revoked, nor changed. Death will not disappoint you, and, rest assured, you cannot disappoint him.

Think, my dear hearers, how certain is this meeting. Think, too, how soon it may come; how suddenly and unexpectedly, this enemy may fall upon you. Jesus warns you, that he will come upon you in a day and an hour, when ye look not for him. Think of this.

And think, lastly, O think seriously, I implore you, how disastrous and dreadful will be that encounter, if Christ be not with you. Embracing Jesus in his arms, Simeon could exclaim, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!" Just before breathing his last, old Hilarion lifted up his feeble voice and said, "Go forth my soul, go forth with joy; go forth to conquer. Thou hast served Jesus these seventy years in life, and he will now crown thee in death." Thus triumphed these holy men; and thus can triumph the christian as he embraces his Saviour in the arms of faith, and feels the assurance of eternal victory. "Now let me die since I have seen thy face!" Such was the language of Jacob, as he beheld Joseph; and such is the christian's language. Now let me die! Let me die, for by faith I have seen Him whom my soul adores! Let me die, that with open vision I may see him more perfectly; may see him as he is, and be satisfied, forever ravished, with his beauty and his love.

But for you, O for you, how different, how dismal, will be a dying hour! I have said that the christian may calmly behold the harbingers of Death. But to you, how fearful these harbingers, for they announce the approach of your executioner. The sacrifices, the separations, which Death enforces, the christian can endure with tranquility. But how appalling these sacrifices and separations to you; for they are the first strokes of vengeance, the beginnings of that second death which shall have power over you, shall separate you from God and from all holy beings forever.

Lastly, the grave into which the christian can look with serenity, the tribunal which the christian can approach with

humble confidence, how dreadful that grave, that tribunal to you. For from that grave you will be raised, only to the "resurrection of damnation;" so that I may say that Death is your last friend, and that at the resurrection your last refuge will be beaten to pieces. To that tribunal you must be dragged. There you must stand and hear the irrevocable sentence—shattering the very air—and shattering your inmost soul—"Depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

My very dear hearers, I beseech you, I adjure you, think on these things. And think on them now. To-morrow may be too late.

"With noiseless step Death steals on man—  
No plea, no prayer, delivers him.  
From the midst of life's unfinished plan,  
With sudden grasp he severs him.  
And ready, or not ready, no delay—  
Forth to his judge's bar, he must away."

#### A FAITHFUL DELINEATION OF A LOVELY CHARACTER.

My hearers, the last enemy has lately invaded your neighborhood, and taken from you one dear to many, and it remains that I now say a word as to her whom we have lost. In doing so, I comply rather with the law of these exercises, than with my own wishes, or those of her family. There was in Mrs. Coleman's whole character such a delicacy and diffidence; she shrank so instinctively from every thing like display; above all, she had caught so much of the humility of those with whom she has gone to mingle—who cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus—that I feel as if I were grieving her gentle spirit, by even naming her here, by speaking even a word of her in a pulpit sacred to her Redeemer.

However, a brief tribute must be paid to her memory. It is due to her friends and family, and to that grace by which she was what she was. Mrs. Coleman was the only daughter of Mr. George Mason, long known and revered in this State, for all noble christian virtues. She was born 22nd October, 1785. In the year 1815, she gave herself to the



Lord, having felt that change, compared with which, all other events are insignificant. In obedience to her Saviour, she was baptized and became a member of the County Line church, of which she continued a member until her death, 14th January, 1850. This profession, thus made, she adorned during life; and He who kept her by his almighty power, amidst the trials of life, supported her in the last conflict; filled her soul with faith, with hope, with calm and holy triumph.

In her character the first thing which struck me, and which must have impressed all who knew her, was her piety. Never did I know one who seemed to me to exemplify more beautifully the religion of Jesus. And when I say the religion of Jesus, I mean what is peculiar to that religion.

Man is a religious being. Religion is not an accidental thing; it is the deepest and most essential want of our nature. Hence all have some religion, and too often the dead are commended for virtues which belong rather to philosophy than christianity.

In our sister's character it was christianity, it was the religion of the gospel, which shined in mildest and softest lustre.

God has promised that all his people shall be taught of Him; and it was under the tuition of the Holy Spirit that she was taught the truth as it is in Jesus. No doubt she received many instructions from her noble father, and I know that she read much herself; but there was a clearness, a symmetry, a vitality, about her theology, which at once proclaimed her teacher; which made me feel that she had sat at Christ's feet, and been educated in that school where so many babes have revealed unto them things which are hid from the wise and prudent; where so many meek and humble women learn truths which Doctors of Divinity cannot comprehend. Never have I seen a christian whose mind was more thoroughly imbued with all the great principles of the gospel, whose faith was more unfeigned, whose soul was moulded more perfectly into that form of doctrine into which it was delivered.

While others admired her excellencies, what a profound sense had she of her guilt and unworthiness in the sight of God. While others extolled her virtues, with what a sense of utter self-renunciation did she cling to the Cross, and re-

pose all her hopes with entire recumbency upon the merits of Jesus.

Foolish men sometimes speak of salvation by grace, as being dangerous to morality; but what has ever been the fact? The most self-denying and devoted have in all ages, been those who rejoiced most in this salvation. Jesus indeed, has settled this matter by a single remark: "To whom much has been forgiven, the same loveth much." In proportion as we see the freeness and grace of the gospel, we love much; and to love much, what is it but to sacrifice much? This excellent lady rejoiced in salvation by the blood of Christ. She gloried only in the Cross. But the Cross which was her joy, was also her study, and her course of discipline. She learned there those lessons which stain all our pride. She there drank in those influences which reach the springs of character, and elevate the heart above every thing sinful and selfish.

Accordingly, if her faith was that of the gospel, so was her life. What purity! What disinterestedness! What tender regard for others! What uprightness in all her conduct! If pure and undefiled religion be, "to visit the afflicted, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world," that religion marked all her intercourse with society; while in the retirement of domestic life, the character of her Saviour was the glass in which she ever dressed herself, his meek and quiet spirit was the ornament she always wore.

The next trait in Mrs. Coleman's character, which I noticed on my first acquaintance with her, and which I admired more and more as my knowledge of her increased, was a rare combination of perfect simplicity and uncommon intelligence.

Her manner, her very person, her whole presence, had something so artless and unassuming, that at the first introduction, one would suppose her excellencies to be chiefly of the heart. Of that heart he could have no doubt. As to that, all was transparent at first sight. The very first word, the very first look, the first smile, revealed all its kindness and benevolence. Everything told you, here is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. Here is a bosom where piety and gentleness and goodness dwell. Here is a soul, all whose pulsations are sympathy and love.

One would scarcely expect, however, what he would soon discover, I mean the union of very high mental excellence with all this exquisite refinement and sensibility of heart. My intercourse with our sister was limited, but I never conversed with her without admiring the clearness and strength of her understanding.

When Manoah was ready to despair, he was saved, (you recollect,) by the good sense of a woman. There are few ministers who have not often found the counsels of that sex wiser—more impartial and discerning, than those of his own. And I should have esteemed it an inestimable privilege, had I been so situated as to enjoy the counsels of an intellect so sound, a judgment so prompt and true, as that which I found in her who has been taken from your midst.

Her knowledge of character was such, that to me, and I believe to all who were intimate with her, it seemed like intuition. And while she ever sought to plead for human frailty, and ever nourished that charity which “hopeth all things,” her penetration at once pierced every disguise, and interpreted almost infallibly the characters of those with whom she came in contact.

Nor were her conclusions less clear and comprehensive as to the character of human actions. So habitually had she referred her own character to God, that no web, no sophistry of the passions, could entangle her conscience. With the calmness and gentleness of her Master, but with his unfaltering sincerity and loyalty to truth, she instantly detected and condemned all falsehood—she unerringly and instinctively analyzed the multiform deceitfulness of sin, and thus distinguished clearly, at all times, the narrow path of the christian, from the dangerous, though it may be flowery primrose-path which we are prone to choose for ourselves.

No one ever knew the dear lady we have lost, without feeling a third beauty in her character—one which pervaded her very being—I mean the affectionateness of her temper.

Not, my hearers, that what is usually termed an *affectionate disposition* deserves to be mentioned in a christian pulpit, and to be associated with the graces of the christian character. There is a love which is merely the instinct of nature, and which has nothing of moral excellence, either in the sight of God or our own consciences.

I will explain myself, and for this purpose, I take the strongest and one of the noblest of our natural sentiments, the love of our offspring. Now, what more devoted, what more disinterested, what more beautiful than this? What a monster is he who is destitute of this natural affection? But this instinct is not holiness. We possess it in common with brutes, and it may be sinful, by being inordinate, or by preferring the body to the soul.

In our sister, this affection was sanctified and disciplined by grace. However warmly she loved her children, like Abraham, she loved God more. Hence, while they lived, she regarded them as the Lord's; and when they died, her grief was unmixed with murmuring. She never forgot that her children were confided to her, to be brought up, not for herself, but for God, and when they were taken, her faith recognized a claim higher than her own.

And this reminds me of another evidence of the holy character of her domestic affections. I allude to her habitual concern for the souls of her children. One of the most deplorable evidences of a want of faith in christian parents, is their preference of the body to the soul in all their anxiety for their families. And I am persuaded, that our hopes for the church and the world, must be defeated so long as this sin sheds its blight upon our homes and our hearths. The North-star is far inferior to many stars in magnitude and brilliancy; yet on account of its position, it guides the mariner more surely than all the glittering planets, or even the moon in her meridian brightness. Better for the mariner on the open sea, that all the other orbs of night be quenched, than that little far-off star. And it is thus with parental influence. It is removed far from the public eye. It acts softly and gently. But its sphere, the place it occupies, invests it with an importance and power belonging to no other social relation.

I remember here two instances of a sanctified love for our children, which in reading the history of other days, affected me much. The first case was that of Monica, the mother of Augustine, who, he tells us, wept floods of tears, when she heard of his success in his worldly career, for fear his soul would be lost. The other instance is still more striking. It is furnished by a letter from Gregory Nazianzen to his brother Cæsareus. Cæsareus was at the court of Julian the



Apostate. He was amassing wealth as a physician; was greatly esteemed by the Emperor, and rising rapidly to the highest honors. Gregory tells him that his prosperity filled his parents with grief, since it was at a court where Christ was not loved. "*Our mother especially,*" he writes, "*such is her piety, cannot bear to hear of it; and we are compelled to conceal the truth from her.*" My brethren such was the piety of christian parents in other days. Where is such piety now?

In speaking of Mrs. Coleman, flattery would be—what you know it would have been in speaking *to* her—if not a sin, a mistake. I am far, therefore, from affirming that even she had any adequate conception of the unutterable superiority of the souls of her children over their bodies. However, I know I utter the truth in saying, that at all times, it was their salvation that lay nearest her heart. When, a year or two since, it was my happiness to baptize and receive into the church, one of her daughters, she wrote me a letter which I can never forget. A letter just such as Monica, or the mother of Cæsareus, would have written; a letter breathing the gratitude of a full heart for this mercy of God to her child; and every line shewing that the souls, the spiritual interests of her family, were unspeakably more to her than anything earth could bestow.

And that letter was in harmony with all her conduct. It was no fitful ebullition of excited feelings. At all times, in sickness and health, in life and death, the great absorbing solicitude was, that her children might love the Saviour she adored; might obey that call which forever resounded in her ears, "Enter thou and all thy house into the ark."

I will only add, that this affectionateness was not confined to her own domestic circle. It was disinterested and expansive, and many before me can testify to this.

Her connections and relatives of her own age always found in her the same warm and tender attachment; while those who were young almost instinctively grew up to reverence and love her as a mother.

To her neighbors, she was a neighbor. There was a blandness, and kindness, and benevolence, which at once and forever won their esteem and confidence. There was not in her vicinity a house, where her presence and society were not hailed with delight by young and old; while, in

approaching her own habitation, all felt the assurance of a welcome, hearty, simple, unstudied and unsophisticated; the welcome of that old christian hospitality of which Abraham was a pattern on the plains of Mamre, and of which so many models have ever been found in your midst, that it has become a proverbial, characteristic virtue of the Virginia churches.

While, however, in the common acceptation of the term, our sister was a neighbor such as we seldom find, it was in a higher sense, in that import which Jesus attaches to the word "*neighbor*" in the parable of Samaritan, that she especially won for herself this title. It was to the poor that she was a neighbor; relieving their wants to the utmost of her power, and seeking, by kindness and counsel, to mitigate those moral evils of poverty which are its worst calamity.

It was to the erring that she was a neighbor. Like her Saviour, not harshly upbraiding them, but touching and subduing them by her sympathies, and then seeking to reclaim them to God.

It was to the afflicted and sorrowing that she was a neighbor. To them she ever went as an angel of mercy. For she bore a heart which had learned sorrow in the school of earth, and consolation in the school of Christ. She had that education which God only can confer, and which alone can qualify us to minister to human griefs. The path of God's dearest children winds through affliction, and she had trodden that path. She could say with the Apostle, "Blessed be God—even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

This subject is so pleasing to me, I feel so loth to part with such a character, that I have dwelt upon it longer than I designed. It is time to finish, and I do so in a few words.

In the death of Mrs. Coleman, this church has suffered a great, I fear, an irreparable loss. Old fashioned religion, my brethren, is getting to be quite too rare in our churches. And do not ask me what I mean by old fashioned religion? I mean the religion of apostolic days; the religion which

comes out from the world, which lives for Christ on principle. There is too little of this, and too much of a very different religion—the religion of feelings, and sentimentality, and transient devotions, and ephemeral excitements.

In our sister you have lost one whose attachment to the church sprang from her attachment to Christ and to truth. How many members like her are there at County Line? How many can be found in any church, who have proved their allegiance to truth as she did? whose hearts are ever jealous for the glory of Christ? in whose eyes the tabernacles of God are most amiable, and who constantly encourage the pastor by their presence and prayers? You have suffered a great loss. But, though you have lost her presence, her prayers, her example, cannot be lost. Being dead she yet speaketh. From the realms of purity, she still bends her look here and implores and charges you that remain, to be faithful. O if she could return; if she could now appear in our midst; how would she address this church! How would she exhort you to reckon all human afflictions as not worthy compared with the glory to be revealed! How would she animate you to rejoice evermore, and pray and praise without ceasing! Above all, how would she conjure you to count nothing a sacrifice for that Saviour who, for you, welcomed the shame and the cross, and who holds in his hand a crown of glory, waiting to put it on your heads amidst the adorations of saints and angels.

This multitude, gathered many of you from a great distance, and in spite of the inclemency of the day, shows the remembrance in which this righteous woman is held. And your attention proclaims the loss which this community has sustained. My friends, let her example be blessed to you. She is indeed gone—gone to Jesus whom she loved, and whose Spirit she had so deeply imbibed. But not gone wholly, I trust, is she, from you; not gone from your hearts; not gone in the influence she ought to shed upon those who knew her. Such a character is designed by God to be perpetuated, and perpetuated for imitation. Such an example ought to multiply itself wherever it is known. May you copy her meek and gentle virtues. May you replenish and strengthen your souls at that fountain where she constantly repaired, and whence she drew all her strength and consolation—I mean the exuberance of the blood of Christ, “the fountain opened for sin in the house of David.”



Here I wish to conclude, for what shall I say, what can I say, to those who were most dearly united to our sister, and who, in her death, feel their hearts stricken and desolated by a bereavement which we can know but once? When the prophet would express the most bitter and overwhelming sorrow, he refers to the loss of a mother. He says, "*I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for a mother.*" And well may he employ this image, for how many losses united in one! A mother! how many chords does that magical word touch, causing the whole heart to vibrate sweetly and tenderly! What love so holy and enduring as a mother's love? In our trials, what counsels like a mother's? In our sorrows, what sympathy like a mother's? Who can ever forget a mother's countenance? My friends, what we call the countenance, is a very remarkable thing. How long is it forming? How many cares, and conflicts, and trials, and passions, all contribute to its character. And a mother's countenance! how does the heart speak there! How does there breathe, in that calm look, a tenderness, a devotion, which years of care and anxiety and sorrow and joy and ever wakeful assiduity have only rendered more tender and devoted! Who can ever forget a mother's countenance? and who (though death may have taken her away) can ever cease to hear the holy music of a mother's voice? those tones which were drunk in first in childhood, and which still linger with us to the last, are still heard in the loneliness of our griefs, and amid the din and clamor of our passions?

For my part, I have seen enough to convince me that nothing can ever efface from the heart, the memory of an affectionate mother. I believe that, though the young man may seem utterly lost, and every pious inspiration be quenched, and his whole moral nature be in ruins, yet the ruins will be haunted by one hallowed form, will echo with one hallowed voice, which he cannot banish, and before which his heart will be softened and subdued. And I know that when disease has blotted from a daughter's mind all other records, the record of a mother's love still lives freshly there.

Yes, the death of a mother is, to any child, an unspeakable bereavement. To a daughter no loss can compare with it. But let us not selfishly brood over our afflictions. Let us



follow the emancipated spirit of our sister to the realms of bliss, and rejoice in her joy. "If ye loved me," said Christ, "ye would rejoice because I go to my Father." Let us apply this thought to the present dispensation. Let us wipe our tears, and contemplate her, not as dead, but as just knowing what life means; as separated indeed from us, but forever with the Lord, beholding that Saviour whom she loved, and satisfied with his likeness.

Ah! she now comprehends, what this sermon has faintly attempted to describe, the spoiling of death, the overthrow of the last enemy; and could she now speak to us, she would say to her children, "Weep not for me, weep for yourselves." With her, all is light, and purity, and blessedness. With us, how much darkness, and sin, and sorrow.

That death is an implacable enemy, she well knew; for shaft after shaft did that insatiate archer loosen from his bow—each bolt cold and sharp as steel, and each cleaving her very heart. But she now sees all explained. She understands how these strokes only worked out for her a ministry of wisdom and love.

That death is the last enemy we believe, because God tells us so. She knows it. She understands this sublime truth. The field is now quite clear to her. Her soul may now expatiate through all the future, and see no foe, no danger, nothing to mar its purity, or tarnish its lustre, or disturb its peace.

And while this is so, while, with eyes which no tear dims, a vision which no doubt obscures, she thus surveys the past, and looks to the immortality spreading out through all the future, what emotions of gratitude must swell her soul! What love to Him who secured all this with his own blood! *Living*, Jesus was every thing to her. Having not seen him she loved him, and rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In her *dying moments* she wished to hear only of Jesus. "I want nothing but Him," she would say, "He is here, but I wish to feel Him more." When she was asked, "If Jesus was near her?" she exclaimed twice, with a look of triumph, "Yes," adding, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Such in her life and death was Jesus to her. What must He be to her *now*? What language can portray, what imagination conceive, the joy, the transport, the rapture, the ecstasy, of her spirit as it was wel-

comed by Him in tones of unutterable tenderness and love? There he is, that Jesus whom I have so long loved; who for so many years has been all my hope and consolation. There he stands! I see his face beaming with love! I see his eyes bending their light on me! I see his arms open to embrace me! I hear his voice saying, "Come up—come thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

To that Jesus she has gone; and how much better to depart and be with him. With that Jesus she shall forever be; and who would wish to bring her back to the sins, and perturbations, and miseries of this world? No, let us not mourn her departure. Let us rejoice that she has gone to the Father. Let us comfort our souls as we say, She shall not return to us, but we shall go to her. This was the double consolation of David. Let it be ours. She shall not return to us. Never more shall sorrow, and pain, and sickness, and death, reach her. She will never more enter a world where these are the heritage of all.

But we shall go to her. That Saviour she loved we love. That Saviour who sustained her dying hours, will sustain ours. That Saviour who bade her "Come up higher," will soon bid us follow her; and we, too, shall mount up; shall fall in, where she is, among the throng around the throne, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. For thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us kings and priests unto our God, and we shall reign forever.

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## PAUL'S INQUIRY—"WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

A Sermon, by REV. WM. HOOPER D. D., of North Carolina, preached in the Baptist church in Columbia, South Carolina, October 27, 1844.

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*"And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts ix: 6.*

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These were the words of the amazed and terrified Saul of Tarsus, when the Lord Jesus appeared to him in that glorious and miraculous manner on his way to Damascus. His proud spirit was at once brought low—his fierce enmity at once cloven down—and he fell as a trembling suppliant at the feet of that once crucified Jesus, whom he just now hated and despised, and whose people he was making havoc of as a blood-thirsty wolf makes havoc among a flock of helpless sheep. He saw that that same Jesus was the Lord of glory; and hence, as soon as he recovers sufficiently from his amazement, produced by that overpowering vision, to express the feelings of his heart, he breaks out in the language of our text, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He acknowledges Jesus to be his Lord, and therefore entitled to command and to dictate to him his sovereign pleasure. What a change was this for the furious persecutor! A moment before, he would have lost his right hand, or perhaps his head, rather than have accosted Jesus with this title of respect. Nay, he had no other thoughts of Christ but as of an executed malefactor, who had deservedly expiated on the cross his crimes as an impostor and impious blasphemer. How changed in a few moments! Such is the mighty and victorious grace of God, when it comes with its full and sudden energy upon a sinner's heart! It so

totally transforms his views and his tempers, that now he takes for his Lord and his God whom just before he neither feared, nor loved, nor believed in. Having acknowledged Christ as his Lord, we need not be surprised at what follows: "What wilt thou have me to do?" His own will he surrenders; he considers Christ's will as his law; and therefore his question to his new Master is of much the same import as was the address of Jesus to his Father: "Not my will, but thine be done." "What wilt *thou* have me to do?" As if he would say, "Thou art, I perceive, my Lord and my God, and as such, hast an indisputable right to rule me and to command my services. The settled purpose of my soul, when I set out on this journey, was to exterminate the hated sect of thy followers, and to root out thy name from the earth. But now, be it my business and my choice, as I perceive it is my duty, to enquire thy will and await thy commands. Nor do I make any reserves, any conditions with thee. It is not my part to say, I am willing to undertake such and such services; but I beg to be excused from such and such others which are too laborious, or too dangerous, or too humiliating." No: his question implied unlimited submission—a willingness to undertake any thing which Jesus would direct. He had no will of his own about the matter; or rather, so completely was his own will absorbed and merged in the will of his divine Master, that his highest gratification would be to set about doing that will, as soon as it was revealed to him. He therefore wants to know Christ's will respecting him, as soon as he was converted. "Lord," he asks, "what wilt thou have me to *do*?" He takes for granted that he wants him to *do* something. He did not suppose that he had been favored with this astonishing manifestation of Christ's compassion and love to him for nothing. He supposed, of course, that he was to *do* something for his new Master. He found he had a heart to serve Christ, and hence he very naturally inferred that he who had given him such a heart, had *work to do*—had appropriate services on which the new affections of his heart might find exercise and employment. He also would conclude that Christ wanted him to do something, because there was need of so much work. He saw that a world lying in wickedness was to be converted to the knowledge of the gospel. He saw that the harvest was immense and the la-



borers few. He saw that no individual's labors could be spared; that every one now a disciple was wanted, and then there would not be enough. He saw, too, that there was not only some employment for all Christ's disciples, but so much employment as to task and put to the stretch the utmost powers of every individual disciple whom Christ had called into the field. How, then, could he help supposing that there was much for him to do; and how natural was the first question of his new-born soul: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? He is then informed what Christ would have him to do; and immediately when thus instructed, he sets about executing the charge which he had received.

Let us pause upon this most interesting portion of sacred history, and apply to ourselves the lessons which it is calculated to afford.

1. We may remark the change which conversion makes upon the will. Every unconverted man has a will of his own, contrary to the will of Christ. It is his will to gratify his lusts, or to make gain, or to raise himself or his family in the world. It is his will to have nothing to do with religion—to neglect God. It is his will that God would only let him alone to take his pleasure, and allow him to live and prosper long on the earth. If God would do this, he would be willing there should be no intercourse whatever between him and his Maker. He never thinks of asking that question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" If God has business to be done, he wishes him to assign it to others, not to him. He has no relish for it. His heart can take no interest in carrying on God's operations in the world. Nay, it has a positive distaste for them. But conversion produces a revolution in his will. He finds a correspondence between his own will and God's. He has obtained such exalted views of God's wisdom and holiness, that he feels it to be infinitely the best that God's will should prevail, and *his* will should yield whenever there is any difference. Like Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, the christian, if he ventures to express his own will about any matter, always subjoins that condition, "nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

2. We remark the converted sinner's acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty over him. Christ is the rightful Lord and Master, and he is the rightful servant and vassal,

owned by this Master, bought by him, redeemed by him with a most precious ransom, even his own blood. It is therefore perfectly natural in him to ask that question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Not so the unconverted man. He claims to be his own master. He acknowledges no allegiance to any other. His conduct speaks this sentiment, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" He glories in his uncontrolled freedom—in doing just what he pleases. I am my own master, he says; I have a right to do with myself, with my time, with my talents, my money, my influence, my power, whatever I choose. "God is not in all his thoughts."

3. We remark the redeemed sinner's willingness to *act* for his new Master. He has no idea that his religion is to be an idle, inactive principle, locked up in his heart. He feels the strivings of benevolence moving within him, and prompting him to *action*. He has no such thought as that a christian may be an idler—that religion is only a title to certain privileges and comforts—that he has only to sit down and feast on the luxuries of divine love, while the Lord smiles upon him, or to mourn after that smile when it is withdrawn. Paul wanted to be employed. Hence he asks the Lord whether he had nothing for him to *do*? He would have felt disappointed and grieved, if he had received for an answer, I have nothing for thee to do. I can carry on my plans and operations without the need of such a man as thou art. Thou hast only to rejoice in thy happiness in being called out of darkness into light, and in having a title to the kingdom of heaven. O! how, must we suppose, such an answer as this would have chilled and damped the ardent zeal and restless benevolence of the new-born apostle! We may suppose that he would have begged for some labor of love—that he might have thus humbly expostulated with his Saviour: "True, my divine Lord, I am but a man—a vile, unworthy man, totally unworthy of the honor that thou shouldest make use of me to carry on thy glorious purposes in the world. But the feebleness, the unworthier the instrument, the more unquestionably, the more undividedly, the more exclusively will the praise be thine of whatever good may be done. Thou dost not scorn to employ even worms to achieve thy works either of beneficence or of wrath. By means of these insignificant insects didst thou punish the

vain-glorious tyrant, Herod, and bring him down from that brilliant throne to lay his head in the dust. By means of the most contemptible reptiles and swarms didst thou terrify and abase the haughty monarch of Egypt. By a worm dost thou build up the coral islands and continents in the ocean for a habitation for man, where thousands of thy people may find a tranquil home. Oh, then, disdain not to employ me in pulling down the strong holds of Satan—a tyrant more than Herod or Pharaoh—and in carrying to the ears of my unhappy fellow-men the story of thy matchless love—in telling them the glad news that thou hast saved them from eternal ruin and purchased for them a kingdom of endless felicity in the heavens! Oh, grant me the happiness of executing for thee this blessed errand. I want not to be excused from duty. I covet, I crave some work to do for thee—yes, for thee; that will sweeten every toil, nay, it will make even suffering and danger welcome, because it is endured for thee. But if I am to do nothing, if thou assignest me no toils to undertake, no dangers to encounter, no hardships to sustain, no self-denial to exercise, how shall I ever be able to testify the sincerity of my gratitude? How shall I ever have an opportunity of evincing the inflexible strength of my attachment to thee—an attachment which will remain faithful amidst all the opposition and murderous violence of Jew and Gentile? How shall I ever be able to give conclusive and ocular demonstration that neither death, nor life, nor famine, nakedness, sword, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of Christ?—Besides, if I am to do nothing, why, Lord, hast thou implanted these new affections in my breast? What means this tumult in my veins? Why do I find my heart burning to go forth in thy service? Dost thou impart zeal for thy service when there is no service to be performed? Why do I find my heart expanded with benevolence towards my fellow-creatures, if there is no field wherein that benevolence can find place for action? Why hast thou lighted up such a flame in my soul, if no body is to be illuminated or warmed by it? Why hast thou opened to my vision the glories and the terrors of the world to come, and fired my heart with unquenchable desires to snatch my fellow-men from those terrors and raise them to those glories; why hast thou done this, if thou hast no work for me to do? Why



do I feel my soul nerved with a courage which the combined powers of earth and hell cannot overcome, to carry this gospel to the utmost boundaries of the earth? Is it possible that thou hast touched my hitherto torpid breast with all these new, and sweet, and powerful emotions, that they may merely blaze there unseen—agitate and corrode me with useless struggles, and die there as they were born, without having done the world any good, or having produced any other result towards me than the consciousness of holding pent up and imprisoned in my own breast, holy, and active, and strenuous, and unconquerable principles of benevolence, without any field for their exercise, any call for their exertion? No, my Lord; I know thou dost nothing in vain: and I would as soon believe that thou hast created the sun without any worlds for it to warm and enlighten, as believe that thou hast begotten these energies in my soul to burn, and waste themselves, and expire in vain, and not provided an appropriate theatre where they may expend themselves in deeds, bringing glory to God and diffusing blessings among men. Yes, I know that thou hast much for me to do, because I see that much is to be done. I see a world lying in wickedness, which must be won from the dominion of Satan and brought to the obedience of Christ. The field is spacious, the harvest plenteous and the laborers few, hence I am certain that thou intendest no one to be idle—every energy of mind, every moment of time, has a demand upon it. The enemy is active, ardent, not intermitting for an instant his malignant operations, spreading the havoc of eternal death among the thousands of mankind. How, then, Lord, can thy people be still? Surely they must be using every means to defeat what Satan and his active adherents are so industriously contriving and executing. I want to have a share in this righteous battle against the powers of darkness. I therefore humbly ask again: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Such may we suppose were the feelings of the apostle's heart when he put this question to his Master, and in some such manner may we suppose the holy desires of his soul would have found vent if he had been told that the Lord had nothing for him to do. He wanted to be a *doing* christian. He did not esteem it to be a privilege to be exempted from *doing* something. He would have accounted it the



hardest lot his Master could have assigned him to command him to sit still and do nothing, while the labor and heat of the day was assigned to others. Now are all christians like Paul in this? Do all love to go about doing good? Are all zealous in doing good works? Is there not, now-a-days, a sect of *non-doers*? Are there not professed christians who resemble Paul in nothing but in having like him been buried in baptism—buried in water, but not buried to sin and risen again to righteousness? They do not ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” but “Lord, what wilt thou have me to enjoy? I want to taste thy love. I want to enjoy the assurance of pardon. I want to read my title clear to mansions in the skies, but I can’t do any thing for thee. I am too weak. I would rather be excused from any active service. Indeed, I believe that thou hast purchased for thy people a discharge from labor. They are not under law, but under grace. It is their privilege to feast on the fatness of thy house, and not to toil as if they were bondmen under the covenant of works.” Such are the sentiments of some professed christians. So deplorably do they pervert the doctrine of free salvation. Because they are not to be saved *by* or *for* their works, therefore they think themselves not bound to do good works. What would you think of the son of a kind and indulgent father, who should say thus within himself: “I know that my father will give me a portion of his estate, no matter how I behave myself. I will, therefore, take no pains to please him. I will not trouble myself to perform his business, or forward his designs, for I am sure of the inheritance without this?” Would you think this youth had the spirit of a son? Would you not rather think that he was a base, unnatural being, who deserved not a particle of his abused father’s bounty? So is the professed christian, who would plead the freeness of salvation as a reason for his doing nothing. Such a professor does not want to hear of *duties* at all. He wants to hear only of privileges and comforts. Preach to him the duty of christians laboring for their Master, spending their time and their money in promoting his cause, going about like their Master doing good, he straitway takes offence, loathes such preaching, calls it legality, brands you as one that holds forth that men are to be saved by their works. Such was not Paul. He inculcated good works most strenuously. He occupies a

large part of his letters to the churches in detailing christian duties—in telling men how they ought to act in all the relations of life—how husbands ought to treat their wives, and how wives ought to conduct themselves towards their husbands—how parents ought to behave to their children, and children to their parents. He taught masters to be kind to their servants, and servants to be honest and faithful to their masters—how magistrates ought to rule, and people submit quietly to be ruled. Paul was a zealous preacher of good works. No man insisted more strongly on the doctrines of grace, and taught more clearly and forcibly than he, that we are justified *freely* by the *merits of Christ*, *without our own deservings*—yet this same man saw no inconsistency in urging all the professed disciples of Christ to adorn the doctrine of God their Father, by bringing forth abundantly the fruits of righteousness—nay, he tells them expressly that “Christ died to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Hence, we have a right to conclude that where Christ’s people are, they will be zealous of good works, and on the contrary, where men are not zealous of good works, it authorizes us to doubt whether they are the people of Christ.

Paul tells us he was willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. Oh! how unlike Paul are many of those who profess to receive his writings as the inspired word of God! Are they willing to *spend* for him? What do they spend for him in the course of the year? Five dollars? or one dollar? or half a dollar? Do they give with a liberality according as God has blest them? Do not many reap plentiful harvests, a bounteous providence causing their fields to bring forth by handfuls, and yet they grudge a small pittance of this plenty to the Divine Giver? How apt are they to receive an application for money with a resentful spirit, or give some little with a cold, reluctant heart! God loves a cheerful giver, but these are not cheerful givers. They give with a sad, unwilling heart, and feel a bitterness against the man that asks it of them. Are they like Paul, who even wrought with his own hands that he might minister to the necessities of those that were with him? Oh! if there were more christians like Paul, you would not find so many ministers of the gospel going out of our State, because the people wont support them. You

would not find so many neighborhoods without meeting-houses or pastors, because the people are too parsimonious to be at the expense of having them. You would not find so many uncomfortable meeting-houses, with broken windows and open logs for the blasts of heaven to whistle through, if the professed followers of the self-denying Jesus were any thing like as willing to give to the cause of God as they are to buy good lands and horses, and to deck themselves with fine apparel. If people were as concerned for their souls as for their bodies, then might every neighborhood have a comfortable meeting-house and a well provided pastor, who might devote his whole time "to prayer and the ministry of the word," and not be condemned, as he now is, "to serve tables," to spend a great part of life in providing for his family, by teaching school, or ploughing the earth, or working at a trade, while the people are perishing for want of his oversight and pastoral care.

4. We remark, the redeemed sinner's dedication of himself without reserves or limitations, to the will of his heavenly Master. "Lord, what *wilt* thou have me to do?" As much as to say, I am willing to do any thing, provided I know it is thy will. I do not ask thee to assign me this or that particular work—such as will be easiest—such as will be least trying to flesh and blood. No; it is sufficient that thou wilt me to do it. For I know that what thou wilt is wisest and best. Now, this ought to be the disposition of every servant of Christ. If he is sincere, he will want to know the whole of the Lord's will respecting him. He will not, like Naaman, the Syrian, make an exception in favor of some favorite sin, or beg a dispensation from some hard duty. Any yoke or burden imposed upon him by Christ, he finds easy and light, because it is his Saviour's yoke. That thought nerves his nature to endure every thing cheerfully and bravely. But I fear there are many of us, now-a-days, who never make this unlimited surrender of themselves to Christ. They are willing to profess themselves christians so far as regards a certain round of duties; they are willing to be baptized, to go to meeting, to attend on preaching and the administration of the Lord's supper; but they are not willing to crucify their fleshly lusts; to curb their evil tempers; to restrain their tongues from evil and idle speaking; to be perfectly fair and honest in all their

dealings with their neighbors; to make restitution if they have formerly done any man injustice; to give up every kind of gain that is manifestly unlawful, or at least doubtful; to sacrifice some portion of their time, of their labor, or of their money, to the cause of Christ. Let us suppose, now, a man brought to this point, sincerely to inquire of the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" How is he to get the Lord's answer? Is he to get it as Paul did, by a voice from heaven? No; the Lord, since the days of miracles, no more gives directions in that way. He has had his word written down. He no longer speaks to us in thunder from the skies, but he speaks to us in the still small voice of scripture. He tells us that the holy scriptures are "able to make us wise unto salvation;" that "all scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here, then, is our guide—if we want to know what our Lord would have us to do, we must read his written commands. This will furnish us unto all good works. He that sincerely wishes to do God's will, will be much in the study of the Bible, that he may know more and more of that will.

But we must take notice that the Bible instructs us by *general rules and principles*. It cannot enter into all the minutiae of human transactions, and tell us what we must do in every particular case occurring. If the Bible did this—if the Bible were to specify all the various, possible cases in which men have to act, and in which they may need direction, "the world itself would not contain the books that should be written," or, at least, the scriptures would be swelled to such dimensions, that we could never read the hundredth part of them, and should need a set of men, like the lawyers and judges, to search out and expound to us the divine law, before we could proceed a step, as we now have to expound to us the numerous volumes of *human* laws. But, blessed be God, he has assigned to us a much easier task. He has comprehended all things necessary for our direction in one volume—and that a small one—so that every one that can read at all, can find time to read the inspired volume *through*. Indeed, that part of it which contains all that is essential to salvation, to wit: the New Testament, is a very small book. But how has God managed to



compress all necessary directions for human conduct in the compass of so small a volume? It is in this way: He has laid down broad and comprehensible principles of action, which include in them all supposable cases of particular actions. For instance, in instructing me as to my conduct towards my neighbor, he has not specified all the particular ways in which I must do my neighbor good, nor all the particular ways in which I must avoid doing my neighbor wrong. He does not tell me I must not burn my neighbor's house; I must not turn my hogs or cattle into his field; I must not sell him an unsound horse; I must not sell him a piece of goods for more than its value; but it provides for all these cases, and ten thousand such, by these few universal rules: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." "Do unto all men as you would have all men do unto you." "Defraud not." "Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbor's." With these few directions, a man can be at no loss about his duty to his neighbor. He has only to ask himself in any case that may occur, "Am I doing to my neighbor as I would he should do unto me in like case? Am I in this thing loving him as myself?" If man will faithfully consult these rules and be guided by these principles, he will never do harm to any fellow-creature living.

It is evident, therefore, that the Bible never was intended to give us *specific* directions for the determination of each particular case of conduct, but has left us to solve that case by a reference to general rules. Of course the Bible cannot contain directions about societies and institutions that have grown up since the Bible was written. When the Bible was written, there was not an hospital or poor-house in the world. Now suppose one of these men who says he must have scripture for every thing, is asked to contribute something towards the building of an hospital, where the sick are cured, or an alms-house, where widows, and orphans, and helpless people are taken care of. He replies, I can't give any thing; there is no scripture for it. I don't find any such house spoken of in the Bible. His neighbors join to put up a school-house, or clear out a road, or build a bridge. He is asked to help. I can't, he exclaims; scripture don't tell me that I ought to build school-houses, or bridges, or clear out roads.

Let us suppose now, an honest, sincere christian to be anxious to know what the Lord would have him to do respecting the benevolent and religious institutions of the day. He asks, first, Lord wouldest thou have me to be a member of the Bible Society? The Lord tells him that the scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation; that faith comes by hearing; that the Eunuch was prepared for embracing Christ by reading the scriptures; that every man must try to save as many souls as he can. He then looks at the Bible Society. He sees that by it the word of God is circulated over the world; that by its means 100 Bibles are put in circulation now for one before; that Bibles are rendered five times cheaper than they were formerly; that the Bible in the course of few years has been translated into two hundred different languages of the earth, and ship loads of the life-giving volume sent all around the world to the perishing Gentiles; that in fine, more has been done since the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1804, to supply the lost race of man with the word of eternal life, than was done in the 1800 years before that time. How, then, can such an inquirer hesitate? He must say, If I believe the Bible to be the word of God and able to make men wise unto salvation; if I love it and have tasted its preciousness in my own soul; if I love my fellow-creatures and want them to be holy and happy; if I think it better that 100 Bibles should be in circulation than one; that a poor man should be able to buy a Bible for half a dollar than for \$2, or a Testament for 25 cents than for \$1; if I think it better that the one hundred millions of Hindoos, the twelve millions of Burmans, the three hundred millions of Chinese, the fourteen millions of Japan, the fifty millions of Africa, the people of the Sandwich Islands, of Otaheite, of New Zealand, and innumerable other pagan nations, should have the Bible in their several languages, and each man a copy in his own house, in the course of a few years, than wait for this blessing, till half a century or a whole century has elapsed, then I must be friendly to the Bible Society. I must bid it God's speed. I must encourage it and contribute towards it. I must bless God that he has put it into the hearts of his servants to embody themselves for this purpose, to combine their united strength and zeal to diffuse the rays of the Sun of Righteousness over a dark-

ened world. Can I oppose such a Society as this? Can I speak evil of its contributors and of its managers? No; God forbid—I should be afraid of slandering God's dearest children and most active servants. I will rather remember Gamaliel's advice: "Refrain from these men and let them alone, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Suppose our inquirer next to wish to know of the Lord what he would have him to do with respect to Missionary Societies. He finds no mention of them in scripture; but he finds Christ's disciples commanded to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature. He finds them commanded to pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest; he finds that God has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; he finds Christ saying the laborer is worthy of his meat; he finds Paul praising the Philippians for bearing his expenses while he was preaching at Rome, and telling the Corinthians that he might justly have claimed support of them while preaching the gospel at Corinth. Can a christian when he considers these things, doubt that he ought to promote missions; that it is the Lord's will he should join in this thing? If it is our duty to pray for any thing, it is our duty also to use all other proper means to bring it about. For example, it is right we should pray that our heavenly Father would provide food and raiment for all our needy and suffering fellow-creatures. But are we to stop here? Are we to satisfy ourselves with mere prayer—not relieve, as far as lies in our power, those poor and needy persons who are within our reach? What would you think of a man who, on a cold winter night, when the snow was driving in sheets from the heavens, and the freezing wind was piercing even to the bones, should, at his family devotions, pray to God to have mercy on all who were exposed to the inclement season, and yet he knew at the same time that there was a family lying out not far from his door, without shelter and without fire, and would not give them either? Would you not think him a hypocrite, his pretended concern for his fellow-creatures mere sham, and would not God consider his prayer as a mere mockery? Yes, we are told to let our love be without dissimulation, and the apostle James says, "if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace,

be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? We all see that this would not be real, but affected humanity. The man might be expressing wishes that the hungry were fed and the naked clothed, as if he had a very compassionate heart, and yet care nothing about them, as he showed by not doing any thing for their relief. Now, in what respect does *he* differ from such a man as this, who prays that God's "kingdom may come," and that the gospel may be preached to every creature, and yet will not budge one foot, nor give one cent, to build up that kingdom and spread that gospel? Will a man tell me that he finds no mention of Missionary Societies in scripture, and therefore he won't support them? This is my answer: When Christ told his disciples that he came to save the whole world; that it was his will they should be witnesses for him in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, he thought he had sufficiently signified his will to set them upon the adoption of all the necessary means to carry these, his grand plans into execution. The first propagators of christianity were guided by inspiration—they were told where to go and where not to go. *We* have no such special directions. *We* are obliged to be governed by the general principle and spirit of Christ's religion. We know, and that is enough, that it is our Lord's will that his gospel should be preached to every creature which is under heaven, and knowing this, we are left to our best judgment and discretion as to the choice of the wisest and best measures to bring about this desirable end.

Christ expects that his servants will be ingenious and thoughtful in contriving and devising new and improved methods of doing good. He knows that love is an active, restless principle; that it will forever be thinking of some way of gratifying and serving the object beloved. We may, therefore, consider all the contrivances of this industrious and benevolent age for diffusing the blessing of religion over the world, as just so many expressions of that blessed principle of love which Christ has poured into the hearts of his people. As the world advances in knowledge, and christians increase in wealth and power, of course new and improved methods of doing good will be discovered and practiced. And will any man refuse to co-operate in these



methods, because they were not practiced in primitive times? How absurd this would be, we may easily see by stating a particular case. Paul and the other sacred writers had to write their letters to the churches on parchment, and every single copy of those epistles had to be written out with the pen. Of course, copies must have been few, scarce and dear. Hundreds of christians could not have a copy, and could only hear them when read publicly in the churches. But now the noble, the glorious art of printing has been invented, whereby copies of the scriptures are become so numerous and cheap, that every man, woman and child, that is able to read, can have a Bible and Testament. What a delightful alteration is this—how much to the benefit of mankind! Yet this is an invention of modern times; an invention, too, of uninspired men. We may say that nothing ever occurred in the world so much calculated to extend the gospel and to fulfill Christ's dying command, as the invention of the art of printing, and yet this did not take place till more than fourteen hundred years after Christ. Will, then, our objector refuse to use printed Bibles because no such thing was known among the apostles? Shall the churches declare printed Bibles unscriptural, and that they will hold no fellowship with any who use them? //

But surely there are none of my audience so ignorant and illiterate as to embrace such notions as these. If there are, they are a hundred years behind their countrymen in improvement. They ought not to live in this enlightened age and in this enlightened country, but they ought to have been born five hundred years ago in the darkness of the middle ages, when not one man in a thousand could read a letter or write his name. The truth is, that God's servants, by combining together in these different Societies, have achieved, in a few years, an amount of good that never would have been achieved by their individual, unconnected exertions—they have been enabled, by pursuing a wise and skillful system, to do more in five years for enlightening and reforming the world, than could otherwise have been done in a century, and they have done it for one-fiftieth part of the expense. Yet these are the men whom some wise Solomons of the day decry and slander as a set of sharpers and knaves! But no doubt their divine Master is looking down with smiles upon their labors of love, and whispering to

them these consolatory words: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Indeed, so plain is christian duty on this point—so indisputably right is it for all good men to speak well of, and take part in these benevolent operations of the day, that it is matter of astonishment with me how it could ever have been questioned; how christians could ever have hesitated one moment. I am persuaded that our churches never would have been mistaken or been doubtful of their duty in these matters, if left to their own plain good sense. But there is in many a place, as there was in Samaria, some "*Simon*, who uses sorcery, and bewitches the people, giving out that himself is some great one, to whom they all give heed from the least unto the greatest, saying this man is the great power of God." I cannot account for it, that so many Baptist churches should have given into these narrow notions, unless from the influence of some ministers who mislead the honest people, infusing into their minds suspicions against the integrity and purity of design in the leaders of these Societies, speaking ill of men far better than themselves. Believe them not, my brethren. Depend on it that the managers of our great Bible, and Missionary, and Tract, and Sunday School Societies, are among the best and purest of men, and have far more piety, and true worth, and good sense, than their detractors. Remember that there always will be some to speak ill of good men and good things. Our Lord himself was called a devil, and his holy apostles were reviled as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things. No wonder, then, that there are some now as there were then, who "speak evil of the things they understand not." If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of his household? I admit that all who have thought evil and spoken evil of these Societies, are not bad men. Some of them may be, and doubtless are good men; but they are misinformed men, they are misguided men; they have given themselves up to believe the statements of those who are so covetous, that they hate and oppose every measure which calls upon them for contributions, or who are enemies to godliness, and so

prejudiced, that they will not take pains to ascertain facts. I believe that those who have on foot these great institutions, and who go through all the drudgery of carrying on the benevolent enterprises of the day, are men far above mean and mercenary motives—nay, so far from making money by their share in these enterprises, that they sacrifice large sums; many of them giving more to the cause of Christ in one year, than those who defame them give in their whole life-time. They are, many of them, wealthy men, who find a pleasure in bestowing their money on every laudable object—who, by their conduct, show that they believe it to be “more blessed to give than to receive,” and whenever they hear of some virtuous enterprise, some worthy object, are ready to pour their hundreds, yea, their thousands, into the treasury of the Lord. Not only so, but they will give their *time* and their *labor* to these benevolent objects. They will spend hours in disagreeable and tedious employments, for the single motive of doing good in the world. Yes, I know there is many a young man, and many a young woman, with ample fortunes, who will undertake the drudgery of teaching in Sunday schools, of going to the houses of the poor, and to the abodes of the degraded sons and daughters of vice, who will talk to them in a kind and sympathetic manner, relieve their wants, and try to persuade them to read the Bible, and to read good tracts, and to send their children to be instructed. Such business as this can have no attraction for them but the pleasure received from doing good. These are offices of kindness done from the pure love of Christ, and love of those for whom he died—they are such offices as no money would purchase—nay, if you were to offer these excellent young persons a compensation for their labor, they would scorn the thought, and almost tell you as Peter and John told Simon, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou has thought the gift of God may be purchased with money.”

But if we cannot persuade these enemies to all modern methods of doing good, which have been suggested by the inventive and active spirit of christianity; if we cannot persuade them to embrace our opinions on this subject, we hope they will leave us at liberty to hold our own. We would not submit to have our liberty violated in this matter. If any set of men choose to cry out against all benevolent so-

cieties, shall they be lords over my conscience and say I shall think so, too? No; I would allow no man, or set of men, to exercise this despotism over my conscience. I would no more allow twelve, or twenty, or thirty men to dictate to me and say I shall not do what I believe will promote the glory of God and the good of man, than I will bow to the Pope of Rome and let him tell me what I shall believe, and what I shall not believe. It is rank tyranny to attempt it. If any church on earth were to excommunicate me for holding such sentiments as these, I would only pity their blindness and prejudice, and consider myself as suffering in the cause of righteousness. I am ashamed that any church bearing the name of Baptist, advocate such sentiments. I blush and hang down my head when I am among other christians, to hear an article read from a newspaper that such and such an Association condemn all the benevolent institutions of the age, and forbid their members to have any thing to do with them. But I will tell such men one thing. These institutions will go on—God will succeed and prosper them. They will gloriously triumph over all opposition, and leave nothing but shame and confusion of face to those who attempt to stand in their way. It is the honor and glory of the Baptist church, that it has such men as Fuller, and Pearce, and Carey, and Judson, and Boardman, and Wade, who have either toiled at home to support missions, or have carried the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, crossing the raging ocean, venturing among cruel barbarians, and pining away life in a parching sun and sickly climate all for love to the dying souls of the poor heathen, while some men sit at home in slothful ease, and revile them. But their “praise will be in all the churches,” and their renown will be sounded on the tongues of grateful millions for ages to come, when the names and the calumnies of their opponents will be buried in oblivion, or remembered only to be wondered at for their prejudice and illiberality. Yes, I trust that in less than fifty years from now, it will hardly be believed that any set of men could have been found to oppose all these good and glorious deeds of christian benevolence. If some enemy of the Baptist church shall then start up and say, Ah! some years ago your people were violent opposers of these things, your children will deny the charge as a slander, and say, “Well.



if such opposition ever was made, it never could have been in the civilized portions of our land. It must have been in some remote, out of the way distance, in the hollows of the mountains, where the people could not read, and where the sun did not shine upon them more than half of the time he was above the horizon. May God bless what has been said, incline us all to inquire "what he would have us to do," and give us a heart to obey his will when we know it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE OF FAITH AND WORKS.

The faith of the new-born soul, not followed by good works, if we can suppose such faith to be real, must of necessity affect the growth or health of the spiritual man. Either he must remain a mere dwarf in stature, or, if forced to expand by the application of stimuli, he must suffer all the effeminacy of the hot-bed or green-house plant. Whereas, on the other hand, the spiritual man, brought into constant exercise and appropriate labor, is invigorated, and attains his full dimensions, proportions, energies, beauty, usefulness and enjoyment. Nor is this all. The natural tendency of faith is to produce works which re-acted on itself secures its own increase: and the natural tendency of works is to increase faith, which re-acted on themselves, magnify and multiply themselves. Take for illustration the following examples:—

Faith loves to hear and peruse the word of God; and the word heard and perused, increases faith. Faith inspires prayer, and prayer invigorates faith. And thus it is with all the graces in all their application. Faith works, hope endures, and love labors; and then each is in its turn, reciprocally promoted by work, endurance and labor. One of the most impulsive influences to charitable deeds, is the performance itself of charitable deeds. If you wish a single act of kindness done, in the least thing, go to him who does the greatest acts of this class, and the most of them. The soul by the contraction of itself into itself, reduces itself to an infinitesimal; or by the expansion of itself beyond itself, comprehends infinity.

The inferences from these premises are important as they are numerous. We hence learn the folly of neglecting a

duty because we are disinclined to it. The neglect increases the disinclination, which would be counteracted by the performance. You stay away from the communion table, because you do not enjoy the presence of your Redeemer, as if you expected to find him by avoiding the place of his abode. You shun the society of the faithful, because your heart is cold and desponding: whereas that society is among the very means which God has ordained for your warmth and cheerfulness. Let principle act itself out, by the use of the appropriate scriptural means of its own development, and it will be itself perfected by the re-action of those very instrumentalities which it has itself employed.

“Seest thou,” says the Apostle James, speaking of Abraham, the father of the faithful, “how faith wrought *with* his works, and by works was faith made perfect?”

ED.

THE THOUGHTS AND DICTION OF THE BIBLE.

To say of this or that portion of sacred scripture, that it is remarkable—that it is interesting—that it is extraordinary—is to fall infinitely below the subject. The Bible is full of facts, truths and expressions, all of which are of inconceivable beauty, force and grandeur. It is a collection of mines of diamonds—it is alps upon alps of gold, not the gold of Ophir, but, as the Apostle Peter expresses it, “of gold more precious than of gold that perisheth.”

“O may these sacred pages be,
My ever dear delight,
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.”

Few books, if any, have been so mangled, by the commentaries of ignoramuses and dolts; but it stands a colossus, a pyramid, inviting the gaze of every beholder.

ED.

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IMPUTATION:

IN A SERIES OF SERMONS, BY REV. A. M. POINDEXTER, HALIFAX CO, VA.

THE IMPUTATION OF THE SIN OF ADAM TO HIS POSTERITY.

“*By one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners.*”—Rom. v: 19.

The passage announces a fact, the most melancholy which has occurred in the history of our world, the introduction of sin amongst mankind. It refers to the transaction so graphically sketched in the sublime narrative, Gen. iii, when man partook

“The fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world.”

This fact is introduced as the predicate of an argument relating to the efficacy of the righteousness of Christ in the justification of believers. The argument appears to be, that Adam and Christ sustained a similar relation to mankind, and that, as in consequence of their connection with Adam, all men are constituted sinners by his transgression; so in consequence of their relation to Christ, all believers are constituted righteous by his obedience. Our object in calling attention to the subject, is *to establish and illustrate the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity.*

I. By *imputation* we mean charging against, or reckoning to, in a *legal sense*. That the sin of Adam, in his *first* violation of the law of God, was by a legal sentence charged

against his posterity. It has been said that this word “has a *proper* and a *figurative* meaning”—that properly it means to charge against, or place to the account of one, that which really belongs to him—that its figurative meaning appears when it is used with reference to charging against one that which does not properly belong to him, as though it did. But this is false philology. Words never have a figurative meaning. They are often *used figuratively*, but in all such use the force and beauty of the figure depend upon the retention of the literal signification. When we say, crushed by misfortune, overwhelmed with sorrow, the words retain their literal import, and the force of the expression is derived in the one case from causing the mind to conceive of misfortune as a ponderous weight, in the other, of sorrow as a mighty flood. But in the case before us, there is not even this figurative use of imputation. Whether that of which it is affirmed pertain to the person in his own right or by transfer, the charging or reckoning itself is literal. The proposition which we design to support is, that *the sin of Adam was imputed to, or charged against his posterity, so as that for it they are condemned by the law of God.*

Adam sustained two relations to his descendants. He was their natural progenitor, and their representative head. The existence of the former of these relations is self-evident. And in consequence of it, all mankind come into being depraved in their nature. He was created holy. By transgression he became unholy. In accordance with the law of procreation, those who descend from an unholy being, must be unholy. The acorn always produces an oak, the lion a lion, and man man. The character, as to its essential qualities, is as certainly transmitted, as the form and visage. With the principles in the case we have now no concern.*

* The doctrine of human depravity is not only a part of revealed truth, it is taught by universal experience. Human beings, in every known instance since the fall, (with the exception of Jesus,) manifest unholy dispositions at the earliest possible period at which any manifestation of character can be made; and they continue to exhibit them as long as they live. It is impossible to account for this universal effect, without a correspondent universal cause. And such a cause is supplied by no other hypothesis than that which traces this depravity back through all generations to the original father of mankind; and from him through father to son, by natural generation. We touch not here the question, whether the soul is generated by the parent, or is, in every instance, a direct cre-

And we state the fact to show that the inquiry before us relates, not to man's moral character, but to his legal condition.

1. Our first position in sustaining the doctrine announced is, that *Adam was the representative head of his posterity*—that under the constitution in subjection to which God chose to place man, he, the first of the race acted for them, so as that, in a legal point of view, they are regarded as doing what he did. We use the term *representative* not because *all* the ideas which men are accustomed to attach to it are applicable in this case, but to indicate the *vicarious relation* of Adam as one acting in the place of others.

That Adam thus represented the race is not affirmed, in so many words, in the Bible. But statements are made which clearly imply that he did. In Gen. i: 26, in the consultation which the divine Trinity held regarding the creation of man, God says, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Remark the plural pronoun *them*, in the second member of this sentence. Man, as created in the image of God is styled *them*, and as such, is to have dominion over the earth, and all animated existence. In the 28th verse, God gives this command unto the pair whom he had made: "Be fruitful and multiply,

ation. Indeed, we deem speculations of this kind utterly inadmissible in theology. It is sufficient to us that man, in his personality, has a soul as well as a body; and *that the proximate cause of his existence stamps the moral character of the person*. When God created man, man bore the moral image of God; when the Holy Spirit produced the human nature of the man Christ Jesus, he bore the moral image of the Holy One; and when man procreates man, he bears the moral image of man. This sequence ensues, not from legal representation, but natural relation. Some who have treated of the doctrine of Original Sin, (we may mention President Edwards for example,) appear at times, to have lost sight of this distinction. But it seems to be obvious that *depravity* is transmitted, not by *imputation*, but by *impartation*. It is inherent, not relative. It is a moral quality, not a legal state. It involves a legal condition—that of condemnation. Upon the supposition that men are not legally liable for the sin of Adam, they would still be condemned for the unholy dispositions which they inherit. But then their condemnation would be solely on account of what they are considered in themselves, and not in any way of what they are as represented by another.

and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." That this injunction, to subdue the earth, and to rule "over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," included the posterity of Adam, as well as Adam himself, is too obvious to need proof. Verse 29th: And God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." That this grant was made to the descendants of Adam, cannot be controverted. Now these things are addressed to Adam in his own person, and not to him and his posterity. Yet they are included with him in what is said. It may be objected; God says to Adam, that he has "given to every beast of the earth, &c., every green herb for meat;" and that the progeny of these animals were as certainly interested and intended in this bequest, as that of Adam in those made to him. This is readily granted. The object in citing these passages is not to point out any peculiarity of relation, but to show that what was said to Adam, related to his posterity alike with himself. In the 2nd chapter, 16-17 verses, a new fact relating to man is recorded. God gives him a law, and as the penalty of disobedience threatens him with death. What conceivable reason is there why the posterity, who have been included whenever Adam has been before addressed—the *them*, who were created in the image of God, are not here; too, intended? Adam violated the command of his Maker. In the 3d chapter, 16-19 verses, is recorded the sentence pronounced against him. This curse involved his posterity. Still does the ground bring forth thorns and thistles unto man; still in sorrow does he eat of it all the days of his life; and still does the sweat of his face enrich the soil which yields him its reluctant support. The last and most awful part of this sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," evidently corresponds with the threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This sentence has been executed upon all of mankind, who have lived before us, and we are tremblingly awaiting the same doom. Let it be remarked, that the execution of this sentence on mankind is not suspended upon their personal transgressions; that, in fact, no mention is

made of them, except so far as the assumption of descendants in the denunciation of the sorrows of parturition. Why, then, are they involved in it? Why do they all continue to suffer its afflictions? With regard to the curse of the earth, whether any one shall suffer from it, depends not at all, and in the nature of the case, cannot depend, upon his own acts. He is subjected to it by the mere circumstance of being born into the world. The sorrows of life, though they may be increased by personal criminality, or mitigated by prudence and piety, often assail us without any connection with our own acts. "Man is born unto trouble." Death is not consequent upon our actual transgressions. The apostle, in the chapter from which the text is selected, places this point in a strong light: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." That is, infants, who have committed no *actual* sin died, from Adam to Moses; and from the days of Moses until now, the bud of life has withered, the just opening flower has fallen from its stem. The father's heart has mourned his early lost; the mother's tears have watered her infant's grave.

Death is, emphatically, the penalty of transgression. Under what law did these infants live? and when did they transgress it? Could they possibly have committed personal sin? Yet sin there was, or there could have been no penalty—no death. If we suppose that Adam so represented his posterity that he acted for them, and that they are legally condemned because of the act of their head, the death of infants as the penalty of sin is accounted for. But if each individual be held accountable to law *only* for his own acts, then we cannot consider the death of infants penal. The apostle, however, declares, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And this declaration, that death passes upon all men as the penalty of sin, he follows with the statement before quoted relating to the death of infants.*

Thus we have seen that before his creation God spake of

* It has been contended, that, by the expression, "Them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," infants are not intended. Were this admitted, it would not injure the argument. *Infants die, and death is the penalty of sin.*

Adam as the head of his race; that after he was made, he is addressed in the same character; that in this character a law is given to him, and a penalty annexed to its violation; that this penalty in all its awful fullness has come upon his posterity; that it has come upon some of them under circumstances forbidding the idea that they suffer in consequence of actual transgression; and upon all, in some particulars, without any connection with their personal sins. Why is all this? To us it seems perfectly inexplicable, except upon the ground which we have stated. *Adam was the representative head of his posterity, and his sin is imputed to them.**

2. Our second position is, that Paul, by an implication stronger than direct assertion, teaches the doctrine.

We first invite attention, in proof here, to 1 Cor. xv: 21-22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The subject of which the apostle is treating, is the resurrection of the saints. He assumes it as an admitted truth, that all die in Adam. What do these expressions mean? "By man came death."

* Some of the advocates of imputation consider the command to Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as of the nature of a *covenant*; something superadded to the law of his creation, and intended for a limited time, with the promise, if he faithfully observed it during that period, that he and his posterity should be confirmed in a sinless and happy state. However plausible this theory may be, and whatever of importance they may attach to it, there appears to us to be this insuperable objection to it, that it is not revealed in the word of God. We are not told that this law was any thing more than the test to which Jehovah chose to subject the obedience of his creature. We are not told that this test was to continue for a limited time, nor that, at the expiration of such limited period, he continuing obedient, he and his posterity would be confirmed in a sinless state. But we are told that God created Adam holy, placed him under this prohibition, and when he violated it, pronounced upon him a sentence which has taken effect, not only upon him, but upon his descendants, and upon them, to a great extent, irrespective of their actual transgressions. And inasmuch as the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, it seems reasonable to infer, that, had he continued obedient, his obedience would have been imputed to them. But as to a limited period of trial, and a promise of confirmation in holiness, we see no necessity for such inferences. We doubt whether men are at liberty to pursue such speculations, at least so as to constitute them the basis of theological doctrines. We prefer to say in such matters, "Secret things belong to God."

“In Adam all die.” The apostle cannot mean that when Adam died, all men literally died. This is contrary to facts. Does he mean that, as Adam was the first that sinned, and as death is the consequence of sin, all men, without any such connection with him as to participate in his guilt, sin by the force of circumstances and thus die? But then they would not die in Adam. Does he mean that the connection resulting from natural generation causes them to die, and thus that they may be said to die in Adam? But why not, then, in Noah, from whom, as from Adam, all since the flood are born? Why not from their immediate ancestors? What can he mean, but that the sin of Adam is the cause of their death? And this is the more evident, because of the comparison which he institutes between death in Adam, and resurrection in Christ. The obedience of Christ is the procuring cause of the resurrection of his people. Let us reverse the statement of Paul. As in Christ all shall be made alive, so in Adam all died. As Christ, by his obedience unto resurrection, secured life to his people, so Adam, by his disobedience unto death, secured death to his posterity. As the acts of men have nothing to do with procuring their resurrection, so the acts of men have nothing to do with procuring their death.

We next introduce Rom. v: 12–19. The passage is too long to be repeated entire. Note the expressions, “by one man sin entered into the world—through the offence of one, many be dead—the judgment was by one to condemnation—by one man’s offence death reigned by one—by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation—by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” The introduction of sin—the many made sinners—the sentence of condemnation—the infliction of that sentence in the reign of death—these all by the one offence of the one man! What mean these declarations? Can they import less than that the guilt and penalty of his transgression passed upon them? That his sin was imputed to his posterity? Men sinners without guilt? condemned without transgression? punished without condemnation? all because their father by natural generation, sinned?

In the foregoing part of this epistle, the apostle had stated and proved the universality of sin and condemnation. The Jews are condemned, for they have violated revealed law;

the Gentiles, for they have transgressed natural law. The inquiry would arise, Whence this universal guilt and condemnation? The apostle had also adverted to the plan of redemption through Christ. And for the double purpose of answering the anxious inquiry regarding the sinfulness of man, and of illustrating the provision of mercy through the Saviour, we may suppose him to introduce these statements. Thus connected with his previous argument, the meaning becomes clear. He is not making a casual statement. He is pointing out the cause of this universal guiltiness of man. He is not merely saying who of the race first transgressed, but accounting for the universality of transgression. This interpretation is confirmed by the repeated use of the causal particles, *by* and *through*. When we say a man was killed by lightning, we mean that lightning caused his death—when we say he died through exposure, we mean that exposure killed him. It would be impossible for language more strongly to express a causal connection. And the structure of the sentences of which they form a part—the use of verbs indicating executive agency—clearly shows that this causality is not instrumental, but procuring.

But strong as is the proof afforded by these passages considered simply as affirmative, they are, if possible, still more conclusive. The truth which they teach is not stated as a new revelation, but as a well known and admitted doctrine; a doctrine familiar to the minds, and incorporated into the faith of those to whom he wrote;* a doctrine so well understood, and so firmly held, that he could reason from it to

* The Jews held the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. The late Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, in his work entitled *Joseph and Benjamin*, commenting upon this passage, says: "From these words it evidently appears, that the apostle took it for granted, that it was a doctrine well known and believed, that Adam's sin was imputed to the whole human race."—p. p. 85. Having previously quoted Moses, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David and Solomon, he proceeds to adduce the authority of ancient Rabbins: "That Adam was the federal head of the whole human race." Menass, Ben Israel saith, "Whereas Adam was to be the head and principal of the human nature, it was necessary that God should endow him with all perfection," &c. *De Fragilitate*, p. p. 34. Again, in his discourse *De terminè vitæ*, he says, "Aben Ezra saith, that the definite article *Hay*, is not prefixed unto proper names in the scriptures, only it is so unto the word *Adam*, Gen. iii: 22, and the reasons is, because in Adam, all his posterity, the whole race of mankind, is denoted and signified," etc., etc.

the great mystery of justification through Christ. It was a first principle in their theology. And who were they to whom he wrote? A part of them were Jews, to whom had been "committed the oracles of God;" a part were Gentiles, recently converted to Christianity. It is as if he had said to them, Ye know, brethren of the stock of Israel, how that the scriptures teach, that by the transgression of Adam all men were made sinners, and that judgment unto condemnation came upon them; and ye from among the Gentiles, who have believed, bear witness that they who preached the gospel unto you have constantly affirmed the same doctrine.

More than this:—the apostle has so interwoven these statements with his argument, that, if we are not made sinners in Adam, we are not made righteous in Christ; if we are not condemned in Adam, we are not justified in Christ; if we die not in Adam, we live not in Christ.

We repeat the question, How could these things be affirmed, if mankind are related to Adam only as his descendants? The Jews were the descendants of Abraham. Abraham sinned. Could it be said they were made sinners in Abraham? that by his sin judgment came upon them to condemnation? Can these declarations be made regarding any parent? Are they in the word of God, made concerning any one except Adam? Here, then, we have the express teachings of the apostle, corroborating the induction from the records of the creation and fall of man, and establishing the doctrine for which we plead. The conclusion would seem to be irresistible, that Adam was the representative head of his posterity, and that his sin is imputed to them.

3. It may serve to confirm our conviction of the truth of the doctrine, to remark the frequent introduction of the same principle into the dealings of God with mankind.

After the flood had subsided, and Noah, at the command of God, came forth from the ark, he "builded an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite every thing living as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and

heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.”* And in consequence of this determination, God made a covenant with Noah and his sons, and placed the token thereof in the clouds.† In this covenant all mankind are interested equally with them. And the token of the covenant still spans the heavens to inspire our hearts with confidence in the divine protection. Yet the occasion of its being made, is the well pleasedness of God with the piety of Noah.

Abraham was the covenant head of the Jewish nation. Promises were made to him, and renewed to Isaac and Jacob, which could only be fulfilled to his posterity. They were blessed for his sake. The Jews gloried in this. They boasted of their descent from Abraham, and considered themselves as chosen in him to be the people of God.

Men frequently suffered severe inflictions on account of the sins of those with whom they were connected. The destruction of the family of Achan is an awful illustration. The curse pronounced upon Canaan, and the blessing of Shem and Japheth, by Noah, are in point.‡ He spake by inspiration, and the curse and the blessing are still receiving fulfillment under the providence of God.

Now, in these and similar instances, which might be indefinitely multiplied, the same principle is developed. “God,” to adopt the language of Andrew Fuller, “God, for wise and holy ends blessed one, or many, in reward of the obedience of another, to whom they are related, in a manner as though it were performed by themselves,” and upon the same principle he inflicted judgments. The extent of application is far more limited in these cases, than in the imputation of Adam’s sin. But if the principle be acted upon at all in the divine government, who shall object to its application here?

II. Waiving other evidences of the truth of the doctrine, which might be drawn from the statements of scripture in relation to the natural condition of man, we come to offer some explanations, and to notice some objections.

1. We have called Adam the Representative Head of his race. As already stated, the term is used, not because all the ideas which men attach to representation are applicable

* Gen. viii: 20–22.

† Gen. ix: 1–17.

‡ Gen. ix: 25–27.

in this relation. We are accustomed to *choose* our representatives. We may, therefore, hastily conclude that there can be no representation where there has not been such choice.

But so far as the legal force of acts is concerned, this is manifestly untrue. A county elects its delegate to the State Legislature. We have voted against him. Are we therefore not bound by the laws which he enacts? The majority have not voted, because they have no right to vote. Are women and minors free from the laws, because they have no vote in the election of the law-makers? Are we not bound by laws which were enacted before we were born? And why? not because they were made by our fathers, for our fathers were then perhaps the subjects of another government; but because the community which enacted them represented, by precedence, that to which we belong. It is no argument against the representative relation of the father of the human race, that they had no choice in the premises.

And here we anticipate an objection against the justice of the procedure. If it pleased the divine Wisdom to create one man as the representative of the race, to place him in circumstances most favorable to the preservation of his virtue, and to consider his obedience or disobedience, as to legal consequences, as the obedience or disobedience of the whole, where is the injury to them? Were it not thus ordered, the result, practically, would be the same, unless each were created separately—that is, unless man were not man. The first of the race becoming depraved by transgression, the whole race would be depraved, and by a moral necessity, sinners by actual transgression as soon as they acted at all. Such they now are, and such they would have been, independently of any other than a natural relation to Adam. Their condition is not, therefore, injured by the representative relation.

But it may be that it is infinitely advantaged. It may be that the existence of this relation was necessary to the introduction of that remedial system, through which “life and immortality are brought to light.” Angels have sinned. For them, so far as we know, or can infer, no salvation has been provided. We pretend not to know the reason. We can, however, easily perceive that a scheme of redemption for a number of beings, each existing separately and independently, must proceed upon a very different plan from

that relating to a race all one, and in one. In the one case, if an atonement be made, it must be for every one individually. Each offender stands by himself. In the other, the individual offenders are united in a common head, and may be dealt with in him. Suppose one hundred men, not organized into a society, not having any common head, to rebel against the sovereign power. Though ninety-nine of them should make their peace, the hundredth is in no sense relieved. If, however, these men are associated under a common leader, and he make peace for them, they are all freed from the doom of the traitor. Thus, in the introduction, at creation, of the representative feature into the government of the world, we may perceive a foundation laid for the salvation of man.

2. It may be objected, that *guilt* is not transferable; that the *effects of sin may be transferred, but that guilt cannot be*. *Guilt*, in the objection, is used to signify *desert of punishment*. Now this is either moral or legal, or it consists of both combined. If it be intended only to affirm that the moral desert of punishment, or character, is not transferable, we fully assent. But the necessity for such transfer is not involved, it is expressly disclaimed, in the statement of the doctrine. If it is designed to affirm that desert of punishment in a *legal sense* is not transferable, then the proposition demands proof. To assert it without proof, is a begging of the question. If our arguments have proved any thing, they have established the converse of this proposition. And it would not affect their validity, though nothing analagous had ever taken place under human governments. It certainly is competent to Jehovah to administer his government upon such principles as it may please him to introduce, whether these principles are adopted in human jurisprudence or not. And it is not difficult to conceive that it may be right for Him "who knoweth the end from the beginning," to establish regulations which could not be safely copied into human legislation. But this principle has been acted upon amongst men. Not to mention the often repeated instance of Zaleucus, who gave his own eye to save his son's, we may refer to laws of attainder, as exemplifying this remark. In all such laws a man's family were regarded as one with him, and were punished for his crime. In former times, it was not uncommon for cities to deliver themselves from ut-

ter destruction, by surrendering some of their most distinguished citizens to the vengeance of the conquerors. Hostages, or securities for their quiet submission, were, not unfrequently, taken of subdued towns, and these hostages were to be put to death if their countrymen failed to comply with the conditions of surrender. With the equity of these proceedings, we have nothing to do. They serve to show that men, in their dealings with men, recognize the vicarious principle in the imputation of legal guilt.

3. It has been said, no man is sensible of blameworthiness on account of the sin of Adam. No one repents of it. But if it were imputed to them, they must needs repent of it, as they do of their personal transgressions.

We have again to notice a want of just discrimination. The objection proceeds upon the supposition, that the doctrine requires an acknowledgment of personal moral turpitude on account of Adam's sin. And it is in thus confounding of character, with legal amenability, that the whole force of the objection lies. A man may recognize himself as accountable for that for which he feels no self-reproach. You are security for an administrator. He has been negligent, or criminal, and the estate is lost. Are you not bound to make good the loss? but do you blame yourself? We are justified by reason of our union with Christ. We rejoice in the grace thus conferred. But do we, therefore, arrogate to ourselves any personal desert of praise? The language of our hearts is,

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.”

This, after all, however, is a matter of personal consciousness. That those who think they have no more concern in the sin of Adam than in that of Noah, should feel no emotions of grief and shame, no sense of condemnation on account of it, is to be expected. A man's feelings upon such subjects—upon all subjects—must correspond with his belief. Nor will it surprise any one accustomed to watch the operations of the human mind, that such persons should bring forward the objection we are noticing; so apt are we to make our own consciousness the standard of what others feel. But the consciousness of such a man is no proof that those who believe in the imputation of the sin of Adam, do

not lament and acknowledge their just condemnation on account of it before God. On the contrary, the very fact that his feelings correspond with his belief, should teach him that theirs also, correspond with their belief.

4. But it may be objected, you present a strange anomaly. A sinner not personally unholy. It cannot be.

No, it cannot be. The government of God is perfect. Part is adapted to part, and every part to the whole. There can neither be a sinner not unholy, nor a justified person, not as to his essential character, holy, though the sinner be such by the imputation of Adam's sin, the justified, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Men are as certainly naturally depraved, as they are sinners by Adam's transgression. Christians are as certainly spiritually renewed, as they are righteous by the obedience of Christ.

So intimate, in fact, is the connection between depravity imparted and sin imputed, that, while it is necessary for perspicuity of statement and clearness of perception to distinguish them, they go together in the consciousness of the penitent and in the confessions of the contrite. Together they make up the ruin brought upon us by the fall. As in Adam it was the wickedness of heart that gave malignity to the act of rebellion, so in his posterity it is the corruption of nature, ensuring consent to his sin, that gives that sin its personal hold upon them. It is because we are one with him in nature, that we are accounted one with him in act. At the same time, we are one with him in nature by natural descent, and one with him in act by the federative bond. But enough of objections. To what may not objections be made?

What an awful truth! The whole race of man condemned, and hastening one after another to execution! Dost thou doubt? Why, then, that pain that racks thy head? The anguish that rends thy heart? Why art thou mournfully bending at thy tomb, as the willow that throws its weeping branches around the dead? And wouldst thou be saved? Vain thy repentance! vain thy penances and tears! Can these atone for the sin which six thousand years past drew forth the sword of justice against thy race and thee, and threw the darkness of death over thine onward pathway? Thy own transgressions, the prolific fruit of the forbidden tree, rise against thee. Canst thou blot them out?

No; thy only hope is in the "second man, the Lord from heaven." He has interposed; that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many may be made righteous." O, flee to him! Secure him as thy friend. Accept him as thy Lord. Here is hope. All else is black despair. Amen.

THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO CHRIST:

A Sermon, by Rev. A. M. Poindexter, of Halifax county, Virginia.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—2 Cor. v: 21.

Christian ministers are ambassadors for Christ. He is their sovereign, and their theme. Their business is to beseech men to be reconciled to God; and their argument, that "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This passage is frequently rendered, "he hath made him to be a sin-offering." The word in the original is used to denote both sin and sin-offering. We prefer the common translation. There is in the passage a double antithesis, to the preservation of which it is requisite. The *sin* which Christ was made for us, is contrasted with the *sin* which he knew not. It is not designed to say that Christ knew, or needed no sin-offering, but that he had committed no sin. Again: what Christ was made for us, is placed in apposition with what we are to be made in him. But the apostle does not say, we are made a righteous offering unto God in him, but the righteousness of God in him.

Adhering, then, to the common translation, we inquire, What is meant by Christ's being made sin, and our being made the righteousness of God? The language is elliptical. Sin and righteousness are not persons, but something pertaining to persons—their acts as regarded by law. Sin is the transgression of law; righteousness as opposed to it, obedience to law. It cannot be affirmed that Christ, in his own personal character, was made a sinner. He *knew no*

sin. "He did no sin." It is not true that any of mankind, considered in themselves, have obeyed the law—"they have all gone out of the way—all have sinned." Nor can it be said that any obedience which believers have rendered is *the righteousness of God*. "God justifieth the ungodly." We understand the apostle to assert, that God made Jesus to bear our sins, that we might bear his righteousness. Thus construed, the passage teaches the *imputation of sin to Christ, and of righteousness to Christians*. To the first of these topics, we now invite your attention.

I. *The imputation of sin to Christ.*

To impute sin or righteousness, as we use the term, is by a legal sentence, to condemn or to acquit. When we speak of the imputation of sin to Christ, we mean the charging it against him by a sentence of divine law. And this is done with a view to punishment: that is, to a punishment to be inflicted on account of it. The sufferings of Christ were penal. As such, he bore them. They were not, however, a punishment of him, but of others in him.

To the proof of this doctrine, we now proceed; and appeal,

1. To the representative character and relations of the Redeemer. In the former discourse, we have established the representative relation of Adam to mankind. It is now pertinent to notice, that, in Rom. v, where Paul introduces this subject, he says that Adam was the figure, or type of Christ. The scope of his reasoning indicates that it is in this relation that he is such. The apostle declares, that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The comparison here made is several times repeated, in different forms, in the paragraph. What is the point of resemblance thus adverted to? Not, evidently, either the extent or the nature of the effects. For these are the subject of contrast, not of comparison. The blessing is not as the offence, but *much more*. If the curse abounds through Adam, grace super-abounds through Christ. The resemblance is found in the fact, that both Adam and Christ were public characters, sustaining a similar relation to men. That this it is which constitutes Adam a type of Christ is seen in the fact, that, as sin and death are ascribed to the *one* offence of the

one man, so righteousness and life are through the *one* obedience of the *one* man. This thought is not so apparent in the translation as in the original. But it is sufficiently evident for our purpose. It is by *one* man sin enters—it is by *one* offence, as contrasted with the *many* offences to be forgiven, that judgment is to condemnation.* Now, as has already been shown, the language used in this chapter in regard to Adam, proves that he was a representative head; and the use of similar language can do no less in regard to Christ. But if Christ sustained this relation, then the sufferings which came upon him were in consequence of the sins of those whom he represented, or, in other words, their sins were imputed to him.

To the same conclusion, we should be led by an examination of those passages in which Christ is spoken of as the *second Adam—the second man*. The federative relation supplies the only explanation of these expressions. Literally, Christ was not the second man. Millions had lived and died before him. It is only as in him, as a public head, mankind have a representative being, that he is thus styled. Not, however, farther to press this point here, we remark,

2. In all that Jesus did and suffered, he acted, *not for himself, but for others*.

The conception, the birth, the whole life of Jesus, was a miracle. With reference to his incarnation and reign, Isaiah says, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” And concerning this child thus born *to us*, in Isaiah liii: 3–5, we have this remarkable language: “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken,

* The following is Macknight’s translation of the 16th and 18th verses of the v Rom. 16 verse: “Also, not as the sentence through one who sinned, so is the gift: for verily the sentence was for one offence to condemnation; but the gracious gift is of many offences to righteousness.

18 verse: Well then, as through one offence sentence came upon all men to condemnation; even so through one righteousness, sentence came upon all men to justification of life.”

smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." It were easy to multiply quotations, but it is unnecessary. In this chapter the Prophet commences with the first budding life of Jesus as "a tender plant," traces him through all those circumstances of lowliness which made him as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, no beauty" in the estimation of men, refers to his sufferings as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," points to the manifestations of his divine benevolence in bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, and follows him to the awful hour in which he "was wounded for our transgressions—bruised for our iniquities." And it was all for us! He lived, and acted, and suffered, not for himself, but for others. Upon what principle did Jesus thus act for us? Unless in the divine economy he so represented us as to be substituted for us in the great transaction of Calvary, how could it be said "he was wounded for our transgressions?"

3. We notice the confirmation of the doctrine afforded by all those portions of the scriptures in which Christ is spoken of as a sacrifice—his sufferings as expiatory. These are numerous. Blot them out, and you efface nearly the whole Bible—you have a Bible no longer. "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter." "His soul" was made "an offering for sin." When he came into the world, he was proclaimed as "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and in reference to his death it is said, "he offered up himself." According to the divinely instituted order of sacrifice, a suitable offering having been provided, the offerer, or the priest when he represented the congregation, was to lay his hand upon the head of the victim,* thus confessing, or laying their sins upon it, and then it was to be slain and burned upon the altar. In the institution of the scape goat, the confession of sins in connection with the laying on of hands upon the head of the live goat, is particularly mentioned;† and he is said to "bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited," when let go into the wilderness. It is obvious to remark two steps in this process: 1. The confessing or laying of sin upon the victim. 2. The

* Ex. xxix: 10, 15, 19. Lev. i: 4; iii: 2, 8; iv: 4, 15; viii: 14, 22.

† Lev. xvi: 21.

offering up of the sacrifice. Correspondent to this arrangement are the statements concerning the "Lamb of God." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." Who can fail to perceive that the divine nature is here represented as a priest, laying hands upon the Christ, and thus charging our sins upon him, so that upon Calvary Jesus bore "our sins in his own body upon the tree?"

It may possibly be said, These and similar expressions refer to the *treatment* which Messiah received. He was treated as though he were the guilty one. It was, however, as preparatory to the infliction of death—to the offering up of the victim, that sin was confessed and put upon it. But waiving this consideration, why, we ask, was he thus treated? There must, in every case, be adequate ground of treatment, or it is unjust. Suffering inflicted by any government without sufficient cause, is odious oppression. Here is an innocent being subjected to overwhelming suffering. There must be a reason for this. Will it be said that Christ voluntarily consented to suffer. However voluntary his sufferings, (and we know they were entirely voluntary,) yet there must be that of which law can take hold, or he could never suffer under law. Thus was it with the lamb of the old dispensation. Itself incapable of sin, it could never bleed upon Jehovah's altar, until sin was "laid upon it." So, too, with the spotless "Lamb of God." Our sins imputed to him, brought down the sword of justice, unsheathed upon his heart!

4. You will permit us to present the argument from this last consideration in another form. Jesus suffered under the law of God. "He was made of a woman, made under the law." He lived and died under the law of God. True, he was "crucified and slain" by the wicked hands of his enemies. And his sufferings, so far as men are concerned as the perpetrators of the dark deeds of Calvary, were in violation of all law, human and divine. But he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." They, in their ignorant malice, were but executing a sentence pronounced by a tribunal more august than the Sanhedrim, and enforced by an authority higher than that of Pilate. God said, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow!" and the death groan of Calvary shook creation. Why was this? Under the government of God,

righteousness and life, sin and death are inseparably connected. But the man of Calvary was without sin. Perfect love to God and man had ever breathed in his spirit, and lived in his life. Why, then, does he die? "He was wounded for our transgressions." Our sins were imputed to him, and for them he died.

5. The *agony* which the Saviour endured demonstrates the truth of this doctrine. It was extreme, overwhelming! Go with us to Gethsemane. Hear that agonized prayer! See that bloody sweat! And from whom bursts that wail that startles the ear of night? Whence this *amazement of sorrow*? Men have often endured the prospect of the most cruel tortures with calm disdain, or firm composure. Females have braved misfortune's heaviest surges; have smiled at death in his most horrid forms. Why is Jesus, who has ever manifested such firmness and constancy, such superiority to all earthly things, such contempt of suffering, now making these heart-laments at the prospect of crucifixion? See that group upon the cross! One of them, undismayed by his tortures, undaunted by the near approach of death, rails upon his fellow-sufferer. Another, in this dread hour, heeds not the pain of crushed and quivering nerves, but the interests of his soul engage his thoughts, and from his heart breaks forth the prayer, "Lord, remember me." The other—Ah! hear that cry!—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why does Jesus thus suffer? It was, in the language of Calvin, because "He was stricken of his Father for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities—he was put in stead of wicked doers, as a security and a pledge—to abide and suffer all the punishment that should have been laid upon them—and did feel all the tokens of God when he is angry and punisheth."

"'Twas you my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormenters were."

No, we can account for the sufferings of Jesus only upon the supposition that they were penal and expiatory. But in the light of the doctrine of imputation, we can see how such sufferings must come, even upon the Son of God when he bears the guilt of a ruined world. It was a heavy load. All creative power must have sunk beneath it broken and blasted in everlasting death. But Christ endured it. And

though bruised, and wounded, and slain, he triumphed in the struggle. A conqueror, and more than a conqueror he reigns! Here, O, my soul, are thy hope and thy salvation. Christ crucified is the world's redemption!

II. There are some points relating to this subject which demand explanation.

1. The doctrine of imputation has been so stated as to imply that Christ was himself made a sinner. He has been called "the greatest of sinners," as having the sins of the elect so imputed to him as to become his own; that their transgressions become actually the sins of Christ. Such language we deem irreverent, shocking; and the idea of imputation upon which it proceeds seems to us contrary, both to reason and the word of God. It supposes a transfer, not only of legal, but of both legal and moral desert of punishment. But it is self-evident, that the moral desert of punishment or character, cannot be transferred. It is personal and inseparable from the subject of it. Nay, we may say, it is the person himself—his very nature. Guilt in this sense can attach only to the transgressor. We would be far from charging upon any who advocate this theory the consequences which attach to it. But the theory itself seems to us to be impious. What, the Saviour of sinners morally a transgressor! O immaculate Redeemer, who shall thus think of thee! It is contrary to the word of God. The Holy Spirit, as if with especial caution to prevent such a perversion, has guarded against the supposition of the least moral taint, either personal or by imputation, in the Messiah. It is as one who knew no sin, that he was made sin. It is as the just for the unjust he gave himself for us.

2. It has been contended that the sins of the elect only were imputed to Christ; that for their sins, and for the sins of no others, he died.

That God has an elect people, and that for their salvation especial provision has been made in the economy of redemption, we doubt not. But not at this point in the scheme, as we suppose, is this peculiarity introduced. Christ is said to be the "Saviour of all men," as well as "especially of them that believe." We are aware that such expressions are explained as indicating the general provisions of the gospel as including both Jews and Gentiles—men of every nation and class. And it may well be granted that in some

instances this is the true meaning of the language. But when we reflect that this language is of such frequent recurrence, and that, as in the passage just introduced, it is sometimes employed in connections, which give to such an interpretation a very forced and unnatural appearance, we cannot but conclude that a provision has been made through Christ, by which all men may be saved. Add to this, that all men are commanded and exhorted to believe in Christ, and are threatened with condemnation if they do not believe in him. Now, how can Christ be the Saviour of any whose sins he did not bear? And can we suppose that any would be required to believe on him for whose salvation he had made no provision? To the advocates of a general atonement, this trilemma has been proposed. Christ made atonement, either for *some* of the sins of *all* men, or for *all* the sins of *all* men, or for *all* the sins of *some* men. If the former, *none* will be saved; if the second, *all* will be saved; if the latter, *some* only will be saved. But the whole force of this trilemma is lost, if something more than the atonement made by Christ be necessary to the salvation of any. Then, though he may have died for all, some may not be saved; yea, none might be saved, from the absence of the other requisites to salvation. Now the death of Christ alone saves no one. Faith in him, and consequently the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, by which faith is produced, are as essential to salvation as the atonement made by Christ. To say that there is, either by divine appointment or from the necessity of the case, such a connection between atonement and the exertion of this spiritual power that the one must be co-extensive with the other, is to assume the very point to be proved.

The advocates of a limited atonement extol, it is true, the sufficiency of the atonement. They say, too, that it required the same offering to atone for one sin, that would have been necessary to atone for all. And they found the limitation upon the design of God respecting the work to be accomplished by the death of Christ. Here we apprehend is a serious confusion of thought. The value of Christ's sufferings *as a legal expedient to make satisfaction for sin*, was just what was necessary in the case. If it were more, God was unjust to demand it; if it were less, justice was not satisfied. And this value depends not *alone* upon the dig-

nity of the sufferer, though in the obedience of that his sufferings could have no worth, but also upon *the relation which he bore to those for whom he suffered*. If Christ had not represented the elect, his sufferings could have possessed no worth to atone for their sins; and by parity of reasoning, if he did not represent others, they have no value to atone for their sins. The value of an offering depends not only upon its intrinsic worth, but also upon the design of the offerer. Reasoning, then, concerning the abstract value of Christ's sufferings does not meet the difficulty which is pressed against this theory from the general nature of the invitations and commands of the gospel. Christ is infinite in dignity and worth, and all that he did partakes of the glory of the divine Author. And it may be, that, if only one sinner were to have been saved, the same offering would have been required. Of this we can neither affirm nor deny, because the Bible, so far as we know, is silent in regard to it. But as the power put forth by Omnipotence to create the earth was just what was necessary, and neither less nor more than was designed to be exerted, so the worth of the death of Christ was just so much as, and no more than, God designed it to be. The character of an individual might fully qualify him to represent our government at the Court of England, but if he were only appointed consul at Havanna, his official acts could possess no value beyond those of a consul. A man might be fully competent to represent a State in Congress, but if he be only the delegate of a county to the State Legislature, his acts can have no relation to the nation at large.

May it not be that the design of the offering of Christ is erroneously stated in this system? To us it seems that it was designed to render it consistent with the law of God for him to offer pardon to mankind and justify those of them who should believe in Christ; and this with especial reference to the salvation of the elect. The atonement alone saves no one. It opens a way of salvation to all, that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift might come upon all men unto justification of life."

We have endeavored to show that the principle upon which the transaction proceeds is that of representation. But if the represented shall, in a constitutional way, re-

pudiate the act of the representative, he is no longer bound thereby. Sinners who refuse to believe in Christ, in the exercise of their own moral agency, reject him. They thus shut themselves out from all the benefits of his atonement. In accordance with this view, unbelievers are spoken of as *counting themselves unworthy of eternal life, rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, and refusing to come to Christ*. The scriptures present no obstacle arising from the design of the atonement to the salvation of sinners. The language of invitation is, "All things are now ready, whosoever will, let him come;" the language of command is to "all men every where to repent;" the language of direction is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature;" the language of entreaty is, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die."

To illustrate what we have said, let it be supposed that the Province of Canada were to revolt. After a time the constituted authorities enter into terms with the British government by which that power in consideration of submissions made, agrees to pardon every citizen who has been engaged in the rebellion, upon the condition that he lay down his arms and return to his peaceful avocations. Here would be the offer of a full, free, and general pardon. But the benefit of this offer could be enjoyed only by those who complied with the prescribed condition. If one-half of those to whom the offer related should refuse to submit, would that limit the offer itself? But let us suppose this general offer to be made, while at the same time it is stated that the submissions of the authorities related to only a part of the rebels, and were accepted for them alone. True, they were of sufficient intrinsic value to have secured the pardon of all, but they were not designed to effect it. With what propriety, with what truth, could all be invited to submit with the promise of pardon upon compliance? Now, the system we are opposing asserts, as a truth of God's word, a part of the gospel—that the sins of the elect only were imputed to Christ—that for them, and them alone, he died—that his atonement was designed to save them, and only them. How, then, though its intrinsic value be infinite, can salvation be offered to any other than the elect? Be it remembered, the question does not relate to the duty of

man as the subject of God's moral government, but to the truthfulness and propriety of an offer of pardon grounded upon an atonement which was never designed to secure that pardon. Will it be said, We know not who are the elect—no man can know. We are commanded to preach to all men salvation through Christ. This course is necessary, upon the plan of the divine administration, to the salvation of the elect. And after all, we say nothing but what is true. All who repent and believe will be saved, for none but the elect will repent and believe. It is replied, the question relates not to your duty, but to your theory. It concerns not your propriety, but the aspect in which that theory presents the character of Jehovah. God, who does know the elect, and who knows the designed extent of the atonement, is represented as offering pardon to *all* men, when for the forgiveness of *some no provision has been made*; and when, therefore, upon the supposition that these were to repent, they could not be pardoned.*

* To present this subject in, what we conceive to be, the scriptural light, we remark, that God proposed to accomplish two objects by the intervention of Messiah. For the sake of distinction, we call the first the design of the Father, the second, the design of the Son: premising, that, while different parts in the great scheme of redemption are assigned to the different persons of the Trinity, and each has his appropriate sphere of action, God in purpose, as in being, is One. In view of the determination to create man, and of the fact that he would fall, and with the design to glorify his name, God the father desires to offer pardon to the offender. This he may not do except upon some plan which shall glorify his justice while it magnifies his grace. To secure his object he proposes to his Son that he assume human nature "in the fullness of the time," become the second representative of the race, and by having their sins imputed to him, and by obeying the law, and suffering in his human form the penalty due to them, magnify the law and illustrate the justice of God, on their behalf. That in consideration of his doing this he would give to him, in his own right as Redeemer, a certain portion of mankind, exalt him to the throne of the universe as Mediatorial King, and place at his disposal the third person of the God-head as his agent to carry out the purposes of his mission and reign. The Son consented to, and the Holy Spirit ratifies, the covenant. Jesus comes, and dies on Calvary. The design of the Father is secured. The legal obstacle to the salvation of sinners is removed. The offer of pardon is proclaimed to man. The design of the Son is secured. *He purchases his people with his blood.* He ascends the throne of his glory. He sends forth the Holy Ghost to renew and sanctify *their* hearts, and thus *ensures their salvation.*

But, it may be said, what is gained by this representation? So far as

III. We conclude with a few practical remarks.

1. The subject claims the earnest attention of the unconverted. Jesus Christ has "suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; that, as by one man's

the *design of salvation* is concerned it is limited to the elect, and as to the actual result they only are saved. All that was desired is, to represent *truth* in the relations in which it is presented in the Word of God. It is obvious, in reading the Scriptures, that the work of Christ is represented as having a *relation to man, as man*; and at the same time as having a *special reference to the elect*: that God is represented as dealing with men as moral agents, capable of receiving or rejecting the gospel, and yet, as exerting a special power over some, to overcome the *moral* obstacle, the depravity of their hearts, and bring them to receive the Saviour. Now both these courses of procedure are provided for in the statement submitted. The work of atonement is represented as co-extensive with the invitations of the gospel. A foundation is laid for the salvation of every man. If any be not saved, it results, not from any deficiency either inherent or relative, in the plan of redemption, but from the fact, that they perversely reject salvation. The doctrine of election is maintained. The specialty of design, indicated in the expressions which speak of Christians as the purchase of the blood of Christ—the Saviour as giving himself for his people, his church—is sustained. And at the same time the doctrine of election is so presented as to relieve it from the appearance of *partiality to men*. Men are elected, but it is for Christ's sake, as a reward to him. Infinite wisdom and discriminating love directed the choice; but that there is a choice at all, is to reward the suffering Son of God.

And does any child of Adam complain that the doctrine of election, and of the necessity of a special divine influence, renders the general offer of pardon a nugatory provision? If it be so with regard to him, it will not result from these, but from the perversity of his own heart; and let it be borne in mind, that it is no part of the purpose of the divine administration to meet the cavils, and adapt itself to the lusts of depraved human nature; that an object, higher than the salvation of men, and to which that is subservient, *the glory of God*, is to be secured through the gospel. And if men reject it, this object will be attained in their destruction. They will then see that they perish because they would not be saved.

Does any opponent of the grace of God, charge that the doctrine of election, and of the necessity of a special divine influence, encourage antinomian indifference and tend to licentiousness? On the contrary, they afford the strongest encouragements to repentance and holiness. These doctrines are so interwoven with the promises, and so connected with the precepts of the gospel, that they are a strong moral power in the conversion and sanctification of men. They no more stand in the way of a sinner's salvation; they no more tend to encourage indifference, than the doctrine of providence hinders the preservation of natural life, or promotes idleness and profligacy. To deny the sovereignty of Jehovah, and the dependence upon him of all his creatures, is to forsake, not only the

disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many *might* be made righteous." Men died in the *first man*; they may live in the *second man*. In their position as sinners under the law of God, they were without hope, shut up in eternal despair. Under the mediatorial reign of Christ, hope sheds her heavenly light upon them. They need not die. Pardon, free and full, is offered to them. The assurance of salvation is given to all who believe and are baptized. They are commanded, exhorted, urged to accept the offered mercy. What is their duty? What their highest interest? Is it not their duty at once to submit to Christ? He is their sovereign God. He has purchased the right to rule over them by his "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." He sits upon a throne of grace, dispensing pardon, and justification, and eternal life, to all who submit to him. Is it not their duty to submit? Their highest interests are involved. The deathless spirit, under the misery of unpardoned sins, writhes in unutterable agony and eternal despair. But sin can never be forgiven to the unbelieving, the rebellious sinner. The pardon of sins is suspended upon "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." The unbeliever must be damned! The rebel rejector of divine mercy must expiate his double guilt, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." But, O, free grace proclaims salvation! Pardon, justification, life—life eternal with God! Duty and interest combine to urge you to the Saviour; and will you come? What await ye for? Are the pleasures of sin so enticing, wealth's treasures so precious, the engage-

doctrine of the Bible, but the teachings of common sense. We cannot secure ourselves from danger, or preserve our lives, without his blessing. And yet, who would not be regarded as insane who should fail to seek to avert danger and death? Not a blade of grass can grow, not a flower bloom or wither, but as God wills. All the labor and skill of man cannot make one grain of corn, more or less, without his blessing. But who may sit down in idleness, or riot in unreflecting profligacy? Why, then, regarding spiritual interests, should men be discouraged by the sovereignty of God? Why indulge in supineness from a professed reliance upon the execution of his purposes? After all, however, if they will, they must. Facts bend not to suit the feelings, and subserve the purposes of the wicked. "The Lord reigneth;" and "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

ments of the world so pressing, that ye cannot come? Soon will those pleasures pall—soon those treasures perish—soon life itself shall fail thee.

“Be wise to-day, ’tis madness to defer.”

2. Christian brethren, come drop a tear on Jesus’ tomb. He wept for you. He bled and died for you. Stand near his cross. Hear his death struggle. Your sins have wrung his heart. He bore them there “in his own body on the tree.” He was despised, insulted, crucified, all for you!

“O, for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour’s praises speak.”

And are we saved? Saved by his death? O, what return of love shall equal the gratitude of our hearts! Poor are our best offerings.

“Were all the realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

And, Lord, we give ourselves to thee.—To live, to labor, to die for thee. Graciously accept us for thy mercy’s sake.—Amen.

THE IMPUTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO
BELIEVERS;

A Sermon, by Rev. A. M. Poindexter, of Halifax county, Virginia.

“*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*”—Rom. x: 4.

We understand the apostle to refer, in this passage, to the law of the Jews. They, ignorant of God's righteousness, were expending their religious zeal in vain attempts to reconstruct the dilapidated fabric of their own righteousness. Like one attempting to repair a house, the very foundations of which are utterly decayed, unmindful of the truth, that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified,” they were seeking for justification by obedience to the precepts, and the observance of the rites of their institutions. But the righteousness or justification of God, (*dikaïosune Theou*,) is upon a plan entirely different; that is, through Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. By his obedience to the moral precepts, and his sufferings as the anti-type of the ceremonial of the law, he has fulfilled it, and perfected that to which its sacrifice pointed, an atonement for sin. And this righteousness of God is unto (*eis*) every one that believeth on him. The righteousness of law is by obedience—the righteousness of God is by faith. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

The word translated *end* (*telos*,) has the signification of *fulfilling*. It has been variously rendered in this place. Some translate it *object* or *final cause*, that at which the law aimed, that is, justification. But justification through Christ is by his fulfilling the law in his obedience unto death. Others render it in the sense of *abolished*—*Christ has put an end to the law*. If this rendering were adopted, still, as it is by fulfilling the moral law and dying as a sacrifice, thus perfecting that to which the ceremonial law pointed, that Christ has abolished the law as to its penal power over Christians, and displaced the Jewish institute, the idea is that

which we have given. Christ has abolished the law only as he has fulfilled it. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law." This fulfilling the law for righteousness is, as has been remarked, unto every one that believeth on Christ. The apostle here teaches *the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to believers*. To the consideration of this doctrine we invite you.

I. By the *righteousness of Christ* is meant, *that which he possesses as the representative or substitute of man*; by the *imputation* of this righteousness to believers, that *it is reckoned or accounted to them by God*, in a legal way, so as that *on account of it they are considered as righteous, and are justified by a sentence of the divine law*.

1. We have, in a former discourse, proved that Christ was the representative of mankind. In Rom. v, of which we have so often availed ourselves in this discussion, the object for which he assumed this relation, and the ends accomplished by it, are distinctly stated. 'The object is, that by his "obedience many might be made righteous."' And this object was attained: for "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." And as the disobedience of Adam imputed to his posterity (as has been shown,) constituted them sinners, so the obedience of Christ imputed to his people, constitutes them righteous. We restrict this imputation of Christ's obedience to *his people*, (or believers,) because it is required by the context. While the statements relating to his substitution embrace all men, thus as we conceive indicating the universality of his representation, those as to its saving benefits are restricted. The chapter begins with the declaration of the justification of believers, and ends with the reign of grace unto eternal life. But none except believers obtain eternal life.* The restriction is made throughout this epistle and the other sacred writings. It results from the nature of the case. Unbelievers reject Christ. They are not in him. Whatever be the value of Christ's obedience, it cannot therefore benefit them. But of those who are in Christ, it is said that they are made righteous by his obedience; that his obedience justifies them.

* It will, of course, be understood that in this and similar expressions, we have no reference to those who die infants. They, we believe, are saved through Christ, but not by faith—not by the gospel.

2. The same result follows from the fact, that sin was imputed to Christ. 2 Cor. v: 21: "He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The *object* for which sin was imputed to him, was that righteousness might be imputed to us; the righteousness of God, that of which the Jews are ignorant—that to secure which to believers, Christ is the end of, or has fulfilled the law.

3. The work of Christ, considered in connection with his character and relations, confirms this conclusion.

Christ was "Emanuel, God with us." He was very God and very man. It will not be expected that we shall exhibit the proofs of these positions. To do so, would lead from the subject before us. It is sufficient to remark, that to Christ Jesus the names, attributes, works and honors of Deity are ascribed. He is "the everlasting Father, the mighty God." Eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, are predicated of him. Infinite justice, truth and holiness, are his. Creation, providence, redemption, judgment are his works. He is worshiped by angels in heaven, and saints upon earth. Still, he is a man. He was tempted and oppressed as a man. Hunger and thirst, labor and weariness, pain and death, proclaim his human nature.

Connected with this double nature in the Saviour, is a fourfold relation. 1. It unites him to God. He is his Son—his beloved Son. And thus is invested with infinite dignity and worth whatever he did. His acts and his sufferings are not those of a man simply, but of "God manifested in the flesh." God may safely commit into his hands his glory and the honor of law. 2. It identifies him with man. Exalted as he is by reason of his divine nature, by his human nature he is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,"—our brother, our friend. He is, therefore, fitted to be our substitute in the great work of making peace through the blood of his cross. And if God need not fear to entrust him with his honor and the integrity of his government, neither need we distrust his love and sympathy. 3. Thus by nature united to both God and man, he, as we have seen, becomes, by official position, the representative of man. All that he does, and all that he suffers, is for man. And as growing out of this relation, the Lord Redeemer is, 4. the Mediator between God and man. The friend of both

parties, he steps forward to make peace between them.—Can he effect it?

It is material, in answering this question, to ascertain whether what Christ has done as our substitute is competent to the ends of justice. God, as the moral Governor of the universe, must enforce the laws which he has established. The holiness of his own character, and the interests of righteous government, require it. The only possible way of enforcing violated law is by the infliction of its penalty upon the offender, or upon some substitute of whom the sovereign power may admit. If human science could devise a plan of substitution, by which, without injury to the substitute, the authority of law could be maintained, the offender reclaimed, and the good of society promoted, it would present to our admiration a system of government having higher claims than any which human legislation has established; and every exhibition of its wonderful adaptations would but increase our grateful devotion to such a constitution. With these suggestions before our minds, let us survey the work of Christ. He was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.” He perfectly obeyed its every precept, both in the letter and in the spirit. Thus, by a practical exhibition of its excellence, he demonstrated that the “law is holy.” He submitted himself to its penalty. Thus acknowledging the justice of its sentence against man, and affording a most awful exhibition of God’s retributive justice. He magnified the law, and made it honorable. He, the Son of God, did this. He did it as man for man. The law of compensation under which he suffered, secured, by reason of his Divine nature, his resurrection from the dead; his exaltation to “the glory which he had before the world was,” and the possession of universal dominion as Mediatorial King; and that those, and those only, who become spiritually united to him, shall receive the benefit of his work of propitiation. Who does not perceive that by such an arrangement, the justice of God is as signally honored as is his mercy displayed?

There are two methods of acquittal under a just government. One is by establishing innocence; the other by showing that the penalty of the transgression has been already endured. That is to say, an individual arraigned for a crime, and proved innocent, is acquitted; and one ar-

raigned, and proving that he has been previously condemned and suffered the penalty of the crime now charged against him, is freed from further prosecution. A suffering of penalty as certainly frees from law as does innocence. But by neither of these methods can man free himself from the law of God. He cannot plead innocence, for he is a sinner. To come under the penalty is to suffer forever, for that penalty is death. We do not know the full import of this term. When used to indicate the penalty of sin, it includes the soul as well as the body. Now death brings the body into a state from which it can never recover. And such is the analogy of this condition of the body, and that of the condemned soul, that *death* is properly predicated of the whole man. Death, in its own nature, is eternal. We, for the sake of distinction, sometimes speak of death temporal, death spiritual, death eternal. The scriptures use not this distinction. They speak of each of the states to which we refer as death, but never of *eternal* death. *Eternal* life they discourse concerning. They, when other forms of expression are used to indicate the punishment of the wicked, add the idea of *endless duration*. But when this is used, it is *death*. And this for the very obvious reason that death, in its own nature, is eternal. Now the Lord Jesus Christ suffered this penalty. That his animal life became extinct, is beyond question. But this extinction of animal life was consequent, not so much upon the scourge and the cross, as upon the *inner crucifixion* which he endured. "I have a baptism to be baptized in, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." By reason of his divine nature, it was not possible that he should be holden of death. The eternal, essential life of God, enabled him to part with the life which he had as the Lamb of God, and to take it again. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." According to the command of his Father, he did lay it down, and take it again. This he did as the *second man*. Thus, in him, all who believe have suffered the penalty of the law, and are freed from the law "by the body of Christ." As the law has no further claim upon Christ as the substitute of man, so it has no further claim upon believers considered in him. "He was delivered for

our offences, and raised again for our justification." But this is not all. Christ not only suffered the penalty of transgression, he obeyed the law. This obedience went, it is true, to make up his fitness to be a sacrifice. The Lamb must be without spot or blemish. The necessity for rendering it was not, however, personal, but relative. The very existence of Christ was vicarious. His obedience was as much so as his crucifixion. It was a part of the great whole. Jesus, as our surety, stands before the law of God as having obeyed as well as suffered. When his work is spoken of as a whole, it is *his obedience unto death*.—The whole of what he did, as well as of what he suffered. And here we perceive how believers may not only be delivered from death because Christ has died, but be accounted righteous in him because he obeyed. As their sin was punished in him, so his obedience is rewarded in them.

4. And these statements correspond with the remarkable language of Jer. xxiii: 6: and this is the name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**; compared with xxxiii: 16: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**. That the first of these passages relates to Messiah, is beyond doubt. And it might be sufficient to prove his work to be our justifying righteousness, that such a name is given to him. Names are added to Jehovah to indicate what he is to his people. But not only is Christ called **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**, or, as it is expressed in the 15th verse of the 33d chapter, *The Branch of Righteousness*, this name is given to the church, *she* shall be called **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**. "The name in the Hebrew is *Jehovah-tsidkenu*; and, if I am not mistaken, the use of several other of these compound terms in the Old Testament will determine the meaning of this passage. Abraham called the place where God provided an offering in the stead of Isaac, *Jehovah-jireh*—the Lord will see or provide. Moses called the altar by which he commemorated the victory over Amalek, *Jehovah-nissi*—the Lord is my banner. Gideon called the altar which he built upon the occasion of God's comforting him with the declaration 'Peace be unto thee, fear not,' *Jehovah-shalom*—the Lord send peace. The church in the latter day is described by Ezekiel as a city, and its name is to be called *Jehovah-shammah*—the Lord is

there. "Now the *place* where Abraham received the lamb was not Jehovah, nor either of the *altars* erected by Moses and Gideon. They were only memorials of what Jehovah had wrought. Neither will the city described by Ezekiel be Jehovah; but the presence of Jehovah shall be so sensibly and manifestly with it, that this shall be its *name* or *distinguishing character*. Thus it is that the church, under the gospel dispensation, shall be called *Jehovah-tsidkenu*—the Lord our righteousness; not because she is Jehovah, but because her justification by the righteousness of Jehovah forms a kind of prominent feature in her character."*

We cannot fail to remark the correspondence of these terms with those used in the verse preceding our text, and in other passages of the divine record, to designate the righteousness by which believers are justified: *the righteousness of God—the Lord our Righteousness*. The Messiah is thus called, because he is the righteousness of his people; the church, because she is justified by the righteousness of God. And for this reason it is that we are said to be "accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." The obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ, procured the forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God to all who believe on him.

5. To the same purpose is that numerous class of passages in which Christ is spoken of as a sacrifice and his work as expiatory.

In noticing these portions of the word of God in the discourse upon the imputation of sin to Christ, we have remarked the vicarious nature of Messiah's sufferings. It now remains to observe, that these sufferings constituted a real atonement for sin. Under the theocracy of the Jews, sacrifices subserved two purposes. They related to sins committed against God as the political head of the nation, and they prefigured the One great Sacrifice who was to expiate sin as against the moral government of God over man. For the former of these, they actually atoned. Nothing less than this can be implied by the positive and oft repeated declarations to this effect in the law of their institution. They did sanctify "to the purifying of the flesh." "How much more, *then*, shall the blood of Christ, who, through

* Fuller's Works, vol ii, p. 818.

the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge *our* consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" Yes, "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Paul informs us how this is done, Rom. iii: 24-26, "Being justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins—that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Here our justification is expressly said to be through the redemption which is in Christ; and for this purpose it was that he became a propitiation for sin, that in justifying us God might be just. The exhibition of his righteousness through the sacrifice of Christ enabled him to justify sinners—those in themselves ungodly. But God will not justify the wicked. They who are thus justified, must, therefore, be righteous in him who is their redemption.

6. In addition, then, to the class of scriptures which speak of Christ as a sacrifice, we may insist upon all those which relate to the justification of believers, as sustaining the doctrine.

Justification is a forensic term. It means acquittal—a declaration of *not guilty according to law*. The subject of justification is declared to be innocent. But as has already been remarked, the subjects of justification are in themselves considered sinners, ungodly. How, then, shall they be pronounced innocent by that God whose judgment is according to truth? It has been contended that the law has been superceded by the sacrifice of Christ, and a new, milder, remedial system introduced, under which faith and sincere obedience are accepted in the stead of perfect righteousness. But under such a system, there can be no place for the term justification. The setting aside of law is not the justification of the guilty. There is in such a case no sentence at all. There is in fact no moral character in acts; no guilt or innocence, no condemnation or justification. These terms all have respect to law, and are applicable to the conduct only, as we are regarded as subject to law. Besides, this theory is in opposition to the repeated declarations that Christ came *not to destroy*, but to *fulfill* the law; that justification by faith instead of *making void*, *establishes* the law. It places the law and the gospel in opposition to each other,

and makes the latter to destroy the former. It represents, too, the law as unsuited to the character of man. For if adapted to him, why abrogate or set it aside? The transgression of man, while it alters his standing under law, cannot change the nature of the law itself. It either required *more* than his duty of man before he sinned, or it requires *no more* than is his duty now. But will it be said that infinite Wisdom and Goodness gave man a law too stringent? requiring too much of him? or, that infinite Purity will relax the bonds of moral obligation, and require of him less than his duty? What need, then, of an atonement? If God could thus depart from the requirements of justice and the demands of his holiness, why need Christ to suffer?

Will it be said that justification is by the *law of the gospel*? Then it is opposed to the free justification, the salvation, not of works, but of faith, that it might be by grace, taught us in the word of God. In this scheme, faith is a work, sincere obedience is a course of works, required by the law by which we are said to be justified. It is a righteousness of works which justifies. Nor does it meet this objection to say that it is not by works of law, but by evangelical obedience. It matters not that there is a change of law. It is still by obedience to the new law that justification is obtained. Take away from the system the character of law, and there can be no justification; retain this feature, and it is by obedience to law that justification is obtained. How mistaken was Paul when he said, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness!" How much to be pitied the delusion which caused him so earnestly to desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ! Such a notion of justification is self-destructive. The faith of Christians is of different degrees of strength, their obedience more or less perfect. Under this remedial law, then, some are justified by a more, others by a less, perfect righteousness: that is, by a righteousness which is not righteousness; for all righteousness is perfect conformity to law. Degrees of sin there may be, but degrees of righteousness is an absurdity. Will it be said, to escape this difficulty that all that is required in order to justification is the smallest degree of sincere faith and obedi-

ence? But then those who have more than this smallest degree, have a surplus of virtue beyond what is required, in order to their justification.

It may be said, the scriptures state that faith is imputed for righteousness, but not that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers; it is, therefore, the reasonable conclusion, that faith itself is the righteousness which justifies.

We trust it has been made evident, that while the doctrine is not in so many words affirmed in the sacred oracles, they do abundantly teach the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers. But waiving for the present this consideration, we remark that the doctrine of the objection is involved in the same difficulties with that just disposed of. Justification is by law. But faith is not that which the law requires. This is perfect love to God and man, continued throughout the whole of our moral being. For God to pronounce faith, considered in itself, righteousness, is then impossible. He cannot call that righteousness which is not so. He cannot justify without righteousness. But if it be said that it is not because of what faith is in itself, but because of its relation to Christ, that it justifies us, then, unless terms are employed without meaning, the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness is yielded. If it is because of its relation to Christ that faith has its power to justify, it must be because it finds in him that which is necessary to justification. This is righteousness—a righteousness which may avail to us. And that this is the true interpretation of such expressions, is seen in the fact that faith is a *receiving* of Christ, a *coming* to him, a *trusting* in him. That the righteousness which justifies is not faith, but that to which faith has respect, is further evident, because it is said to be *revealed to faith* and to be *unto* and *upon* all them that believe. The phraseology in the passages in which it is said faith is imputed for righteousness, that we are justified by faith, indicates that faith *is not* that *on account of which* we are justified. It expresses *instrumentality*. Faith is that which unites us to Christ; and by it, we become righteous in him. Similar is the language employed to show the connection of faith with the miraculous cures performed by the Saviour—"Thy faith hath made thee whole. If thou believest, all things are possible to him that believeth." Now faith did not *work* the miracles of Christ. It had no effica-

cy to *procure* even the *exertion of his power*. But he chose to require it, perhaps, for the very purpose of illustrating the importance of faith in the economy of redemption. As faith made these persons whole because it was that upon which Jesus conditioned the exertion of his power, so faith justifies us, because it is that which he requires in order to the bestowment of his righteousness. Thus "it is of faith, that it might be by grace."

The impossibility of justification by any other method, then, connected with the fact that justification is so constantly and variously affirmed of believers, establishes the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them. And this conclusion is enforced by the consideration that their justification is declared to be of grace and by the blood of Christ. "Who of God is made unto us—righteousness."

II. 1. We have now exhibited some of the evidence of the truth of the doctrine. More, much more might be brought forward. But we think we may fairly claim that what has been adduced, establishes it beyond the power of successful contradiction. And how much of the wisdom, and holiness, and grace of God, is seen in this wonderful plan of redemption! It rises beyond all our thoughts, and we can but exclaim in grateful adoration, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" But while the subject far transcends our utmost power of thought, we can see enough of the love and grace of the Father, and of the unspeakable condescension and love of the Son, to inspire our largest gratitude and devotion. Here, too, we rest with confidence. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth? Christ that died?" No, poor sinners, as we are, all guilty before God; we are justified freely through his grace, we are made righteous in our Saviour. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. "Thanks be unto God, for his unspeakable gift!" Thanks, unbounded thanks, to Jesus, for his dying love! Here, then, at thy cross, O Saviour, we renew our dedication to thee. Thou hast redeemed us—thou hast justified—thou hast saved us: What can we do for thee? To speak thy love, to plead thy cause, to suffer

and to die for thee, were a small return for all that thou hast done for us.

“O gracious Lord, we own thy right
To every service we can pay,
And call it our supreme delight
To hear thy dictates and obey.”

2. We behold here a salvation suited to sinners. Guilty and condemned, there is no hope for them by their own efforts. Their moral and religious observances, their prayers and tears, their repentance and reformations, are all of no avail. Filthy rags are all their righteousness. But the righteousness of Christ can cover every stain of sin. God can be just and the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. How often does the heart of the awakened sinner sink under a sense of the magnitude of his guilt, his utterly hopeless condemnation! But let him not despair, but look to the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” In him is righteousness and strength. Faith in Christ is all that is necessary to the justification of the vilest sinner. No effort to propitiate the favor of God, no attempt to blot out the sentence of condemnation, no righteousness of our own, is required of us. Faith in Christ, a simple, hearty, loving reliance upon his finished work. Come, then, ye guilty, ye helpless, ye sin-hardened souls. As the dying Israelite raised his trusting eye to the brazen serpent, so look ye to Christ crucified and live. Amen.

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CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, AS HELD AND ADVOCATED BY BAPTISTS:

Introductory Sermon, before the Central Association, at its session with Mound Bluff church, Marion co., Mi., Oct. 13, 1849, by Rev. W. CAREY CRANE, and published by request of the Association.

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."—1 Cor. iv: 20.

Whether there is any form of government, and if so, what, that meets above all others the approbation of the Almighty, cannot be certainly known to us; inasmuch as the mind of the Spirit in ages past, has plainly indicated one form under one set of circumstances, and another under another. In the earliest ages, theocracy was chosen; subsequently, aristocracy, as represented by elders and judges, in subordination to the theocratic power; in later times, monarchy was clearly indicated, by the selection of Saul and David as kings of Israel. When Jesus Christ appeared, the world's great Reformer, as he was to be the world's great Redeemer, he indicated no preference for any of the governments then existing. His celebrated reply, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," exhibits his determination not to interfere with existing dynasties. If this declaration were insufficient upon this point, his answer to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," would fairly place the question forever at rest. Whether, however, the monarchical or the democratic form was regarded as most desirable, cannot be learned from any expression of the Redeemer or his apostles. And still there are some who suppose that Christianity is naturally and essentially republican. A work written by an eloquent minister of our faith and order, has been recently published, to establish the proposition, that Christianity is republican. How this can be made out, ex-

cept from the form of church government evinced in the combination of materials and consociation of men, in the primitive age of the gospel, I know not. To prove that the Divine favor rests most upon republics, must be alone inferred from the favor exhibited towards the congregational, democratic, republican mode of church government. All exegeses of the Greek term *εκκλησια*, manifestly tend to the conclusion, that the voice of the majority of the popular assemblies of believers, is the ultimate appeal for the decision of all questions affecting the interests of the Christian body. If this mode of reasoning be legitimate, we shall be prepared to believe, that as God designs the whole world to be converted, and thus subordinated to the Messianic reign, so, also, he designs all the governments of this world to be according to the Divine model of republican, democratic, Christian, ecclesiastical governments.

The text is a deduction from the apostle's declaration, that authority is not derived from words *merely*, but *effects*. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." We might hence deduce the proposition, that *God's kingdom is a kingdom of spiritual graces and fruits, and not a kingdom of mere words and professions*. But having been assigned the subject of "Christian Liberty, as advocated by the Baptists," I shall simply employ the text as a starting point in the present discussion. I might infer from the text that a Christian government derives its beneficial effects not from a parchment constitution, but from the practical working of its free principles.

Let us now, therefore, consider the *doctrine of Christian liberty*—

1. What is the meaning of the term?
2. What is not Christian liberty?
3. What is Christian liberty?
4. How have the people called Baptists been connected with all the struggles for Christian liberty?
5. What errors must be avoided in supporting the Christian theory of liberty?

1. *The meaning of the term.*

We may either consider the term as involved in a doctrinal or a political creed.—Liberty, is freedom with restraints. The measure and enjoyment of it can be ascertained only by the number and character of the restrictions

placed upon its exercise. By contrasts of liberty with tyranny and despotism, and all the attendant ills of cruelties, wrongs, outrages and violations of right, we learn the value of free principles.

“Oh! Liberty! the prisoner’s pleasing dream,
The poet’s muse, his passion and his theme;
Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy’s nurse,
Lost without thee the crumbling powers of verse;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires;
Place me where winter breaths its keenest air,
And I will sing, if Liberty be there;
And I will sing at Liberty’s dear feet
In Afric’s torrid zone or India’s fiercest heat.”

Such is a poet’s conception of liberty, as sung by Cowper; and still another poet, the minstrel Beattie, has defined freedom, by law restrained—

“Hail sacred freedom, when by law restrained!
Without you, what were man? A grovelling herd,
In darkness, wretchedness and want enchained.”

Liberty is, therefore, the exercise of privilege and the enjoyment of pleasure, with the limitations of reason and duty.

2. *What is not Christian liberty?*

It is not licentiousness. Abstractly, licentiousness is lawlessness of desire, and action, which knows no rule nor boundaries. Such a principle is anarchy,—man warring against man. It is the chaos of all rights, feelings, possessions and blessings of earth. The raging passions of all human breasts would exhibit the dreadful practice of *Pandemonianism*. In such a state of liberty, like the lost archangel in “Paradise Lost,” as he contemplates the glory of dominion, even in hell, the man whose *liberty* is *licentiousness*, would exclaim—

“The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell.
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.”

In such licentiousness, there is exhibited every foul and unholy element of vice and moral wrong.

It is not unbridled enjoyment. Enjoyment is not the sole end or aim of human life. Labor is our destiny, and conscious rectitude of intention and the faithful discharge of duty, are our rewards for toil. But unbridled enjoyment is brutal. The mind wanders in gloomy fancies to the most wretched scenes of human existence, to behold a world of unbridled enjoyment. The awful facts which Hottentot life develops; the idolatrous worship of the Buddhists; the cruel self-wrongs of all forms of heathen religion; would be sun-light glories of an honorable heaven, compared with such a world of woe.

It is not inclination. It is the belief of many theorists, that man is obliged to do only what he is inclined to do. Such a view is middle ground of some hostile doctrines. Inclination is thus made the standard of duty. If such be the great moral law of existence, the *vis inertiae* which clogs every man's character and nature, would throw around the whole world the broad folds of a dark and impervious lethargy. If nature is corrupt, if our hearts are wicked, if our souls are defiled by sin, our inclination will be corrupt, defiled and wicked, and liberty, natural or Christian, would be *sin*, in the root, stem, bud, flower and fruit. The freedom of gospel deliverance from sin, leads to the exercise of positive duties, and destroys the fleshly indulgence of our corporeal nature. But Christian liberty, affecting soul and body, is a different principle from the inclination of a sinful heart.

3. *What is Christian liberty?*

It is freedom restrained by law. The renowned Mr. Burke has remarked, that "Religion is the basis of society, and they who hold revelation give double assurance to their country." De Tocqueville, in his "Democracy in America," regards "our national religion as the foundation of our morals." Cousin, another French writer of eminence, tells us, "Christianity is that religion whose liberal spirit prepared, and can alone sustain, all the great institutions of modern times." We derive the idea from these sentiments of men of high authority, that liberty, governed by religion, is freedom restrained by law. Freedom encourages no man to the exercise of any feelings, rights or duties, without

regard to the proper boundaries. Law is not intended to do violence to any principle or feeling of our nature. Regarding man as prone to excesses, inclined to vicious indulgences, rules are framed in all codes, for the better security and enjoyment of civil society, simply to limit and restrain all indulgences.

It is the right to worship God according to reason and conscience. In later times, the doctrine of a free toleration is one of the battle cries for liberty. In other days, *man* has been compelled to subscribe to a specified formula of religious views, to qualify for civil trusts or official stations. But as society has advanced, and pure religion has been evolved in practice, neither Mohamedanism nor Romanism is able to compel men to adore that which their heart abhors. Of all the dynasties which have crushed man's spirit, degraded his faculties, or dimmed his intellectual glory, a spiritual dynasty is the most corrupt and odious. Such have ever been the fruitful sources of ignorance, superstition, crime and vice. The rights of minorities have been derided and trampled upon; the strong arm of physical force has been brought to bear against humble men and worthy patriots; the will has been perverted; the conscience goaded and its moral power impaired; and the heart has been depraved to the last degree of moral obliquity.

In all the recent struggles for freer forms of government, in the old or new worlds, *one cry* has towered above all others, and that cry has been a clamorous voice, which has been heard in heaven, and has demanded the right to worship God according to reason and conscience. Our forefathers came to this country to secure unmolested the enjoyment of this right. And Europe has been the theatre, recently, of a great moral drama, in which the principal actors have impersonated the genius of civil and religious liberty. It is indeed lamentable now to learn, that the day of the world's deliverance from the galling operation of ecclesiastical tyranny is postponed to an unknown future day.—But that day will come.

“ Yet, freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder storm against the wind.
Though trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind.

Thy tree hath lost its blossoms ; and the rind,
 Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth ;
 But the sap lasts, and still the seed we find
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the north ;
 So shall a bitter spring less bitter fruit bring forth."

It respects authority and sustains governments. The Christian patriot was never a rebel. He may have been a revolutionist, and struggled to overturn ancient institutions, grown hoary by corruptions, but he has not evinced the spirit and temper of the factionist. The powers that be, have received from him generous support, and legitimate governments have been supported in the exercise of all lawful authority.

4. How have the people called Baptists been connected with all the periods of struggle for Christian liberty?

We claim to have existed, a Christian people, ever since Christ's ascent to heaven. We trace a history through all the past ages back to Jesus Christ,—among the Welch, the Swiss, the Waldenses, and the Albigenses; and wherever known, we have been denounced for adherence to free principles. I cannot expect to say all that this great subject demands. Discussing the history and principles of our denomination, I quoted, on a former occasion, the eminent authority of one whose language I again present, as more beautiful and effective than any I can employ.

"Our churches," says Dr. Williams, "in a mass, were at one time known and denounced in Great Britain, as the advocates of religious toleration,—a claim once denied by the wisest statesmen and the most distinguished divines, as an impracticable delusion, and a most pestilent heresy.—Even in that period of their history most exposed to misrepresentation, the share which, with other pædo-baptist sects, they took in the Peasant war with Germany, it was from their love of freedom that they erred, if an error it were, when they rose against the grinding exactions of the privileged classes. And so much was the love of liberty an element in that movement, that Madame De Stael pronounces the Ana-baptists in that war, rather a political than a religious sect. Voltaire declares that the manifesto in which the hard-handed peasants told their grievances, was one that a Lycurgus might have signed, such was its justice. Lu-

ther's own mind seems to have felt the force and truth of many of their complaints against their rulers; and that acute and learned investigator, Niebuhr, the historian of Rome, lately deceased, declared that 'the right in the beginning was undoubtedly with them.' To have toiled and suffered thus in the cause of civil and religious freedom, might well entitle our community to a more liberal and just award than they have yet received at the hands of the popular literature in their own and our times."

The fires of persecution have glowed against poor Baptists in all ages. Hunted like beasts, and burned at the stake, our ancestors transmit a name, baptized in the richest blood of a noble martyrdom. Before Cromwell's time, Baptists had signalized their love of liberty, and during the protectorate, there were not only despised men and women of this humble order, but generals and diplomatists espoused our principles. Vane, and Harrison, and Milton, are claimed with strong evidence, as converts to our views, if not all professors, of our faith. And Macaulay, the great essayist and historian, has immortalized the humbler names of Bunyan and Whiffen; the young Hewlings and Elizabeth Gaunt. On this continent, Roger Williams, with his illustrious band of warriors for liberty,—universal, civil and religious; for the first time announced, defended and established the great principle, that man should worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. The light from the spark of liberty, struck off from the rock of eternal truth in Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, has blazed into a vast and unbounded sun of glory, destined still to irradiate the pathway of nations, to the last hour of time. During our revolutionary struggle, who stood before the Baptists in the contests for liberty? These despised people, persecuted and imprisoned for non-conformity to a colonial, religious Episcopal establishment in Virginia, drew forth from the father of his country the lofty tribute to their character, that they were, during the revolutionary war, the defenders of, and sufferers for, the glorious cause of freedom. *We have always fought for freedom.*

I might continue till midnight, in detailing evidence to prove that Baptists have always allowed the largest liberty to all other denominations in the exercise of religious worship, when they have been in the ascendant; and have ever suf-

ferred in their defence of free principles. Were it not thus, they would have belied their principles, and God's holy word.

5. *What errors must be avoided in maintaining the Christian theory of liberty?*

First. Lax Christian discipline.

Second. An undue extension of the voluntary principle.

Third. Encroachments upon the separate and distinct offices in the Christian church.

These errors are most grievously afflictive to the genuine child of grace.

In conclusion, I must recommend the faithful study of this great subject to all my brethren of this Association. What more fruitful source of impiety and irreligion, than such an exercise of the wholesome laws of Christ's kingdom, as allows every form of petty violation of Christian rules, or Scripture obligation, to pass unnoticed or unatoned? Christianity has suffered its worst injuries, and has received its most cruel stabs, from a neglect of an apostolic injunction,—“Abstain from all appearance of evil.” And oh! how many severe and bitter wrongs against Christian love, might have been avoided, if every professed recipient of divine grace had said and acted as said Paul, “If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more meat while the world stands.” Attention to personal religion is the surest guarantee that there will be no neglect of public religion.

But the improper extension of the voluntary principle, causes, occasionally, egregious mistakes among Christian brethren. The claims of duty, the obligations of the divine law, and the demands of benevolence, are rejected upon the plea that no Christian is obliged to do more than he chooses to do. Carried to its extreme limit, this plea absolves its advocate from all spiritual laws or Bible obligations.

If there be danger to Christ's body from this quarter, there is also danger lest there may be improper encroachments by co-ordinate officers upon other separate and distinct offices of the Christian church. The minister may trench upon the deacon's province; the deacon may encroach upon the pastor's prerogative; and all from a misapprehension of the proper rules of action and principles of duty which should govern the household of faith. How often are intestine wars exhibited in the Christian brotherhood,—private

members apparently struggling to retrench the influence or limit the power of the ministry! May the Lord grant a final termination to these scenes of strife and sorrow, and may we continue to labor, with due diligence and perseverance, ever remembering, that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

The indications of present times presage an early period for the universal adoption of correct views of Christian liberty. Each year witnesses some new triumph of truth, and all the opposing systems of error and false doctrine are receiving such an infusion of the salt of divine grace, as furnishes us the pleasing hope, that the hour is nigh at hand, when indeed there will be but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." Prelacy and Presbytery, Pedo-baptism and the Papacy, Mormonism and Swedenborgianism, all are approximating the *ultima thule* of Christian liberty. The human mind is awake!—Awake! Never again to slumber; never to die. While it should therefore be our high duty to sustain these principles, how diligently should we exert ourselves to foster a spiritual mind. This will only cost us self-denials: the battle of spirituality with selfishness.

At the battle of Mantinea, in ancient Greece, the hero Epaminondas was pierced with a death wound; and while reclining in the agony of dissolution, he heard that victory had crowned the Grecian arms. Exulting in the joyful intelligence, he exclaimed, "I have lived long enough."—Long enough, surely, for earthly glory! But his friends expressed their regret to him, that he left no children. "I leave," said he, "two *immortal* daughters,—the victories of Leuctra and Mantinea." But the dying Christian has higher cause for rejoicing. It is not that he leaves immortal daughters, but that he has gained eternal victories, compared with which, Leuctra and Mantinea, Waterloo and New Orleans, are vain and insignificant;—they are the victories over *self* and over *Satan*. AMEN.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

Religious liberty—Christian liberty—and the Christian theory of civil liberty,—are three distinct subjects, the confusion of which ought to be avoided with great care in this discussion.

1. *The Christian theory of civil liberty.* Has Christianity any such theory? We think with our author that it has not;—that it no more proposes to commend or to forbid, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Despotism, or Democracy, than it does to interfere with domestic policy, literature, or the common usages of society. That the principles of the gospel, left to work out their own result, would end in the establishment of liberty everywhere, we have no doubt. But to deny that they command obedience to “the powers that be,” although kingly, would be to contradict matter of fact. Any construction of this command, implying a divine right of kings, is necessarily wrong; inasmuch as when the people are guided by the will of a king, they are guided by their own will, if they will a kingly government. The officer is respected, only as he is the representative of the government, which is inherent in the governed, and can therefore be alienated neither by force, nor by their own choice. When a people have the government they choose, they are free, although their ruler may be an autocrat.

2. *Religious liberty*, is quite a different affair. This designates the right, not granted, but originally and inalienably possessed, by every individual, and community, to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, without interference from the civil power. To this liberty there can be but one supposable restriction. This is, that in its exercise it must not invade the rights of others. Except in this restriction, with religious faith and conduct, constitutions and laws, have nothing, absolutely nothing to do, except to protect the citizen. Nor has his neighbor any more right to interpose in the matter. In what respect does it concern either the legislature, or my neighbor, whether I am a Methodist or a Mormon, a Baptist, a Romanist, or a Deist? But even when I pray, I may not invade the rights of my

neighbor, by speaking so loud as to disturb the quiet of his family. I have no more right so to sing the praises of God in my house, as to disturb the peace of my neighbor in his; than he has a right by the orgies of Bacchus in his, to disturb my repose in mine.

With all the light of which we boast in this enlightened age, there is reason to fear, that this subject is yet imperfectly understood. It often happens, that the husband punishes the wife, and the citizen the neighbor, because of a difference in religious faith and conduct. The conscience of the parent may, and ought, to regulate the conduct of the minor child; but not even of *him*, when such obligation interferes with *his* conscience. It may be the duty of the father to *prohibit* his son from the race field or the theatre; since his conscience could not *require* him to go thither, although it might *permit* him: but if his conscience *requires* him to embrace the Catholic or the Mahometan faith, the father has no right to interdict it. If he has, so may a heathen parent interdict the faith of a Christian son. Of this species of liberty,—of liberty in this sense—of liberty as applied to religion in its connection with the civil power, and the rights of others—the Baptists have always been, if we mistake not, uncompromising advocates. Roger Williams on this continent, and Robert Hall in England, have on this subject been exponents of Baptist faith and conduct.

Of course we are no friends to religious *toleration*. We worship not by *sufferance*, but of *right*. And the civil power, no more *permits us to worship*, than *we permit it to legislate, expound, or execute* the laws. In religion we no more ask *permission*, as to what we may believe or do, than we ask permission to breathe the air or behold the light.

3. But *Christian liberty*, offers another, a very different, and a very wide, field of discussion. This has to do exclusively with what is *discretionary* or *obligatory*. In this are involved all such questions as, what is *permitted*; and what *forbidden*? What is *commanded, advised, or indifferent*? Of this class, are many of the questions which at this very moment are agitating the whole Christian world; and which, if we mistake not, are still more deeply to agitate it.

At a very early period, questions of this class began to agitate the church of Christ. And what the Master said; and what the Apostles taught, especially St. Paul, in his

letters to the Corinthians, is just beginning, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, to be better understood. The blending of Jewish and Gentile converts, so opposite in their religious education and habits, into one new faith and discipline, afforded a fit opportunity for the development of those discordant feelings and prejudices, calculated to lead to instructions suitable to man in every age of the world, and applicable to every possible case in all coming time.

Take for example the question of long or short hair,—veil or no veil,—in juxtaposition with the questions of legitimate marriage, and meats, upon which the Corinthians were divided. Some Judaizing teachers inferred from the fact that a Christian is a *new-born creature*, that the old relations of life are annihilated by this new one: and that hence a man might marry his nearest blood relation. Others placed fornication and the eating of flesh of animals offered in sacrifice to idols, in the same category.

In our day, the ambiguous meaning of the word “right,” has created difficulties in this discussion. Many cannot comprehend how a man can have a right to do what is not right. They cannot see the difference between right, the opposite of wrong; and right, a privilege to act as one chooses, in view of the reward or penalty. In this latter sense, one may have a perfect right to do what is forbidden. God himself permits what he has prohibited; inasmuch as he does not prevent it. But of course he holds the offender responsible. Without this right, or liberty, there could be no voluntary agency—nor responsibility,—nor rewards and punishments.

Christian liberty involves the privilege of exercising, unmolested, all those tastes and preferences which are not forbidden by the divine law, nor by the rights of others; and with which, therefore, no human power, civil or religious, has any right to interfere.

Catholics and Baptists cannot both be right. But if either has a right to coerce, so has the other. There is no umpire but God.

And many are unable to distinguish between my right, *voluntarily* to relinquish the *exercise* of a right, and the right of others *authoritatively* to *deprive* me of it. But that same Apostle who while the world stands, would have eaten no more meat of animals offered in sacrifice to idols, if by so

doing, he wounded the conscience of a weak brother, would hurl defiance at the "whited wall," who durst invade his prerogatives, by transcending the powers granted by the divine law.

Hence too, so many propositions from various sources, and in various forms, to use *preventive* regulations, for the avoidance of real or supposed evil;—to enact preventive laws, rendering impossible, what, were it to occur, would be punishable;—to prevent crime, by rendering the commission of it impossible. To exterminate the whole race of horses, by preventing the owning or raising of them, would certainly abolish horse-racing;—and so to legislate as to destroy all facilities of building and other instrumentality, requisite for theatrical and circus exhibitions, might effectually interfere with those amusements. Any contrivance which would make impossible the manufacture of all weapons of war, offensive and defensive, might very much diminish the trade of war. But whether mankind would be any better by the process, is highly problematical. All Asia, and all the East, has tried the experiment of preventing licentiousness, by the segregation of the sexes, and with how much success the world knows. Christianity does not propose to secure the virtue of the fair sex by bolts and bars, but by holy principles and motives. She expects to make the fruit good, by first making the tree good,—and not to make the tree good, by making the fruit good.

Of liberty in every sense, the Baptists have ever been uncompromising defenders and advocates. The enlightened public opinion of our churches is no rope of sand, but is to the cause and interests of religious liberty, and Christian liberty, what the common law is in a legal sense. Our peculiar ecclesiastical polity is the bulwark of our safety, and the safety of truth. That friendly sect, odiously miscalled Quakers, has been riven asunder, by deistical preachers; our strictly ruled Methodist friends have split on the subject of ecclesiastical government; Presbyterian creeds have been no security to the denomination from New-light and Old-light parties; nor has the authority of church-ism, been able to hinder Puseyism and High-church-ism, from committing their ravages. The Baptist churches, with no creeds, have held on the even tenor of their way.

No Baptist church has ever supposed that she has a right

to impose as a condition of fellowship, everything which is universally admitted to be incontrovertibly right. Impatience, ingratitude, uncharitableness, indolence, avoidable ignorance, extravagance, illiberality, every degree of worldliness, whatever does not exactly coincide with the divine law, is sin. Everything said and done by mortal man, has more or less sin about it. But it needs no argument to shew, that if churches are to consist of perfectly holy members only, there can be no church, since no man on earth is perfectly holy.

Cordial and intense brotherly love—comprehensive philanthropy—absorbing concern for the glory of Christ—enlightened, consistent, ardent piety—this will do more to guide believers in the path of usefulness, happiness, safety, than all civil and religious legislation and authority combined. Not even the Divine law, wielded by Divine power too, is competent to make men good: it is grace that does it. Nor can there be a more lamentable evidence of a low state of piety, than that in which Christian churches either need a co-operation with the world to effect a good object; or desire any worldly gratification as a source of pleasure to be pursued. The most innocent, captivating amusement, ever invented by human ingenuity;—yea, the whole round of them combined, under the guidance of the best taste and the most splendid talents,—when compared with the refined pleasures of enlightened piety, fades into utter insignificance.—ED.

EDITORIAL PENCILINGS.

Very different estimates.—Infidelity despises the clergy; superstition idolizes them; the gospel “esteems them very highly in love, for their work’s sake.”

Principle stronger than nature.—“A man that hath friends,” said the wise man, “must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother:” in other words, the friendship of principle is a stronger tie than that of natural brotherhood. Of course we speak of real friendship, as did Solomon. One great man has said of friendship, that it is an “empty name;” another, that it is the “balm of life.” It certainly is *a* balm of life. That is a melancholy picture drawn in the book of Job, of much that passes for friendship.

It was a cutting rebuke of the patriarch, in which he compares the false friendship of his brethren, to a deceitful brook, created by snow from the mountains, and found dry by future caravans, when they resorted thither expecting water for their famishing companies and cattle. Job vi: 15-19.—“My brethren have dealt deceitfully, as a brook, and as the stream of brooks that pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid; what time they wax warm, they vanish; when it is hot they are consumed out of their place. The paths of their ways are turned aside; they go to nothing and perish. The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed.”

Friendship has, however, one unfailing fountain. God's own poet has strikingly alluded to it, in those sprightly words:

“The strongest friendship ever shown,
The Saviour's history makes known,
Though some have turn'd and turn'd it;
And whether being craz'd or blind,
Or being of a different mind,
It seems have not discerned it.”

In a word, it must not be forgotten in all our contemplations of philanthropy, and pity, and respect, and affection, and brotherly kindness, and charity, and all the lovely feelings of human nature in its most cultivated forms, that there are wants in man that no human emotions, or acts, or resources, can reach. Were it possible, and were this whole earth, with all that adorns it, possessed by a single individual, to command, use and enjoy as he pleases—absolutely his, not as a steward, even to God, but his own, in his own right—that individual, *without God*, would be poor, positively poor, compared with the pauper, who has the friendship of God.

Love and hatred.—To love and to hate are, in English usage, *opposite* expressions; with the Hebrews, they were *comparative*. The following note, literally translated from Beausobre et Lenfant, illustrates the difference:—“*I have loved Jacob, &c.* See Mal. i: 2-3. The sense is: I have preferred Jacob to Esau. To hate, signifies here nothing

more than to love less. See Gen. xxix: 31; Luke xxiv: 26; John xii: 15. In fact, if we regard the person of Esau, God conferred on him many blessings. Gen. xxviii: 39-40. And if we regard his posterity, it continued for a long time flourishing. Only God had not the same blessings for Esau that he had for Jacob, who was the only heir of Abraham and of the promises. St. Paul concludes from these passages, that God dispenses his blessings every way equal, with entire freedom, because there is no one who merits any one of them." Dr. Macknight is of the opinion, that inasmuch as *elder* and *younger* necessarily involved primogeniture, and could not affect personal election, the *postponement* of Esau and the *preference* of Jacob, have reference to that privilege only, and its attendant advantages. The absurdity of charging God with injustice, is manifest from the impossibility that the Messiah should descend from two distinct lines, and that it could not be from either except as God chose; and this is the election. The principle is the same, to whomsoever applied, and respecting whatever interests for what world soever.

Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.—The qualifications for an office may be inferred from its duties; and its duties from the qualifications required. If so, the above items of instruction from the Master to the Apostles, imply arduous duties and pre-eminent qualifications. They are, moreover, but a sample of the instructions they received from his lips, and from inspiration. Indeed the whole world seems to have been ransacked for thoughts and expressions to illustrate these duties and qualifications. The labor of the ox, the patience of the lamb, the endurance and bravery of the soldier, the tenderness of the parent, the inflexibility of the judge, the skill of the advocate, the authority of the ruler, the diplomacy of the ambassador, the wisdom of the serpent, the harmlessness of the dove, are but specimens. And yet this is an office, which, in the opinion of thousands upon thousands, may be assumed at any time by any one; one which may be very conveniently coupled with any other pursuit, however laboriously followed for support or profit; which is itself entirely unworthy of compensation, except a very meagre one in form of charity; and for the slightest dereliction in which the poor minister may be branded as a mercenary hypocrite.

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No. 1.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD:

A Sermon, by Rev. J. P. TUSTIN, Savannah, Georgia.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.”—Matt. xxii: 29.

This language was addressed to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead. Their error consisted in rejecting a truth which they could not understand, because the evidence by which it was proved, did not come within the notice of their senses. This disposition of mind, was the great sin of the Sadducees, and all the other Jews, with respect to Jesus Christ. They fully believed that the Old Testament prophecy had predicted the Messiah, who should come in due time, and set up a powerful kingdom. But they had no other ideas of a splendid kingdom, than what they had known of the ancient dynasties of Egypt, Babylon, Persia and Greece; or what they now saw exhibited in the magnificent empire of Rome around them. And they had no higher conception of a deliverer of their country, than the heroic character which they associated with Moses, Alexander, Cyrus or Cæsar. And because Christ and his kingdom did not conform to these pre-conceived impressions which their selfish passions had prompted them to conceive, they rejected him as an impostor, and shut their eyes against the evidence of their ancient Scriptures which testified of Him.

For the same reason that the Jews rejected Christ, and the Sadducees denied the resurrection, have men in all ages disbelieved religious truths, which are not palpably addressed to their senses. In fact, some men claim the privilege of

receiving religious truths by a method of proof in which no religious truth can be received; and if they will believe nothing but what can be demonstrated by an appeal to their senses, they must renounce the Bible altogether, and every particular truth which it reveals.

It is my object in the present discourse, to exhibit the foundation on which the evidence stands for our belief in the doctrine of the resurrection. By a reference to the words of our text, the subject naturally suggests the following order of illustration: and it is therefore proper for us to consider—

I. The legitimate extent in which human reason and tradition may be regarded as the foundation of our belief in the doctrine of the Resurrection.

II. The true and only infallible sources of evidence on this subject, are the Christian Scriptures.

III. The efficient cause of the Resurrection, is the power of God.

I. It is a remarkable fact, that a belief in a future state of being has characterized all races and nations of human beings, in all ages of the world. This belief has assumed a great variety of forms, some people denying particular matters and forms of faith maintained by others, and by the generality of mankind. But whatever variety, or even opposition of opinion on particular points, has been held by different nations at different times, there are certain fundamental principles of belief which are so universal amongst mankind, in all races and ages, that they have been regarded as the result of original innate ideas implanted in the constitution of human nature, or of traditions incorporated into the opinions and customs of men, which they have received from one common source at the beginning, and which have been carried and scattered wherever human beings have been found since the dispersion of mankind after the flood. These fundamental convictions concerning the future state, relate chiefly to the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the nature and duration of future rewards and punishments.

The immortality of the soul, is the first principle that lies at the basis of all belief concerning the future state, and is a truth that seems scarcely ever to have been obliterated

from the traditions of any people. The belief in a future state of rewards and punishments is inseparably involved in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The traditional belief of both of these truths seems to have been almost universal, at all times, and among all people concerning whom we have any authentic historical testimony. And there has been much less variety or opposition in the opinions held on these two truths, than on most of the other points of what is called natural religion. The resurrection of the body was much less clearly apprehended, either by the ancient Hebrews, or by enlightened heathen nations, than the simple truth of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments.

It is indeed impossible to estimate how much the heathen nations of antiquity and all the modern races of people who have sprung from them, were indebted to the Hebrew Scriptures for many of the sentiments which entered into their systems of faith. These ancient Jewish writings were scattered wherever the Jews were exiled or had traveled; and all the nations of antiquity, from the times of Moses, had access to them. And hence the enlightened sages of Egypt, and subsequently the learned men of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Medes, and still later, those among the Greeks and Romans,—these all had the readiest facilities for deriving impressions from the Hebrew Scriptures, and appending them in modified forms to their own invented systems of religious belief. The nations of Western Asia and Europe, which sprung directly from these ancient kingdoms, or which were in communication with them, could all have received their traditional impressions of religion in the same way, by borrowing them originally from the revealed religion of the Jews. But whether the belief of these truths among all who have ever held them, has been derived by tradition from the original inspired revelation to the Hebrew people, or whether they are truths inwrought into our very constitution, as original, innate ideas, which form a part of our nature itself, it is certain that the belief of an immortal existence, connected with future retribution, has been as universal as our race.

But the belief concerning the resurrection of the body, appears always to have been held with much less distinctness, and with a wider diversity of forms. Amongst the

earliest heathen nations, especially the Egyptians, the resurrection of the body was identified with the immortality of the soul. Hence originated the idea of embalming the bodies of the dead, so that the original tenement inhabited by the spirit might be in a state of entire soundness when the soul should come to re-animate it. This gave rise to the structure of the pyramids, for the safe keeping of the bodies and treasures of the royal dead. Amongst other and later nations, the idea of the resurrection was connected with the notion of the transmigration of souls; and they believed that the spirit of the departed, after passing through a succession of many different animals, would finally return and re-inhabit the body which it originally animated. This same impression is held by many nations of the East, and by heathen tribes in other parts of the world.

Amongst the more enlightened nations, both ancient and modern, the doctrine of the resurrection has been held in much greater disrepute than that of the immortality of the soul. The philosophers among the ancient Greeks and Romans, looked upon the body as the prison and degradation of the soul; and their conception of a future state, so far as they had any distinct belief, was, that the spirit would exist apart from all connection with any bodily vehicle, through which it would act and manifest itself. The same vague, but general impression, exists among multitudes of persons in modern times, and in Christian lands; and the doctrine of the resurrection, accordingly, has been the subject of more doubt and scepticism among free-thinkers, than almost any other point of revealed religion. One reason why so much doubt, dissatisfaction and uncertainty have been felt on this subject, has evidently been owing to the absurd representations which many Christian advocates of this doctrine have adduced in support of it. Their conceptions have been so gross, and their interpretation of Scripture so inconsistent with well known and universally admitted facts, that it is impossible to obtain the consent of men's minds to what is opposed to the clearest convictions of enlightened reason, and the irresistible testimony of unquestionable facts. No truth in revealed religion is against the dictates of enlightened reason; it may be *higher* than reason, and *beyond* it; it may be *above* and in *advance* of individual *experience*, but it cannot be at *variance* with those

laws of truth which the God of nature and of grace has impressed upon all his works. It is for these reasons, that it is so important to understand the true basis on which the doctrine of the resurrection is supported, apart from all the hypotheses and reasonings which men have adopted, either for maintaining or rejecting it.

The error of the Sadducees, for which our Saviour reproved them, was, that they rejected the belief in the resurrection, without considering the testimony of the *Scriptures*, and without taking into account the *power of God*. The error of the Pharisees, who maintained this doctrine, carried them to the other extreme, which led them to form notions of the resurrection so absurd and inconsistent, that it is not strange the Sadducees and others were repelled by them. They imagined that Judea was the centre of the whole earth,—that the earth was a vast extended level plain, reaching indefinitely, without end,—that the future kingdom of their Messiah would be a magnificent earthly empire, embracing all the nations of the earth; and that Jerusalem would be the splendid metropolis of this unbounded earthly kingdom. And they seemed to believe, that at the resurrection, the dead would be revived with the same bodies which they had laid aside in dying, and would hold the same relations, as individuals, families and societies, which they had held in the organization of the *human* society, of which they had formed a part before they died. It was this which gave so much point and plausibility to the objection of the Sadducees, when they asked the Saviour, whose wife, at the resurrection, the woman would be, of the seven brothers to whom she was successively married.

Now, it is for reasons precisely similar to these, that ever since the times of the Sadducees, men have used gross and absurd arguments for maintaining the resurrection; and other men have rejected it, because they have had nothing but sensuous and material impressions concerning it; and having first assumed a false hypothesis concerning the nature of religious truth, other men could easily invent arguments to demolish what they had falsely assumed.

The error of those who maintain the resurrection, apart from a simple reference to the Scriptures and the power of God, consists in the *supremacy* which they give to reasonings derived from the material world around them, and from

the analogy of human experience. But the truth is, men can reason only from what they have experienced. And they have no other ideas of this material world, than what they have received through the inlets of sensation, and of reflection on what they have thus perceived. All efforts in reasoning consist only in connecting, modifying and disposing the facts of knowledge thus acquired. Even the efforts of the imagination and fancy can rise no higher than in combining into new shapes and connections the *materials* of thought acquired by experience, and the impressions of the senses from external objects. And it is not possible for us to conceive of modes of existence in a future state, or in another world, except as we combine into new forms of being, the conceptions we have derived from communication with this earthly system in which we live. Hence it is, that all material and sensible representations of the resurrection, and the modes of existence in another world, are to be received with such entire distrust of the sufficiency of human reason to attain a perfect, ultimate knowledge of these undiscovered truths. 'The sensual paradise of the Mahometans, the visionary elysium of the ancients, the socialism of the modern Swedenborgians, and all other gross systems of belief as to the resurrection and the future state, have been derived from the workings of a wild imagination in combining impressions derived from this present material state of things. And yet, from the nature of the case, we can have no definite images of a state of things beyond our present knowledge and experience. The figurative language of Scripture employed to illustrate the blessings of the heavenly state, are used to give us high conceptions of their greatness and excellence, which the weakness of our faculties could not apprehend, without some such appeals to what is dear to our affections, and beautiful to our imaginations. But we are to bear in mind, that revelation has placed its solemn interdict upon our literal interpretation of similitudes, which, it is expressly said, are only introduced to *liken* or *illustrate* the kingdom of heaven. And it is explicitly written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor. ii: 9.

On the other hand, the error of those who reject the resurrection, is in *denying* the Scriptures and the power of God,

beyond the testimony of their physical senses, and their earthly experience. They even disown the separate existence and immortality of mind apart from matter, and disbelieve the spiritual world, because they cannot at present see it and touch it. It is not strange that such persons, who deny their own consciousness and reason, should stumble at the doctrines of revelation. For to every sound minded and reflecting man, it is evident that his soul may exist without his body, just as his body may exist without his soul. He knows nothing either of his soul or body, of spirit or of matter, except by their properties and manifestations, and his own conscious experience of them. The essential qualities of matter are commonly known by the following designations, which are true of matter, either as to state or capacity, wherever it exists in the universe, namely: "extension, figure, motion, divisibility, attraction and repulsion." The qualities of spirit are, "invisibility, sensation, perception, reason, conscience and volition." These powers belong purely to spirit, in its essential nature, apart from anything in common with matter. There is nothing of a common nature between them; so that the properties and capacities of spirit cannot inhere in the existence of matter; and the qualities of matter cannot enter into the formation or consciousness of a spirit. It is equally evident, that if there is *any difference* in the degree of certainty as to the existence of matter and of spirit, we must, if anything, be more confident of the independent existence of mind, than we can be of material existence; for we know nothing of either of them except by our conscious knowledge of the existence of their properties; and we are often more conscious of the qualities of mind, than of matter. We are oftentimes lost to all consciousness of the material world, and cut off from communication with it, by the agency of our animal senses, while we are most intensely alive to the experience of spiritual qualities and exercises within us, and of spiritual objects without us. It is by consciousness that we feel ourselves possessed of knowledge,—that knowledge which is certain truth; but we are more certain of our mental and spiritual existence, than we are of our animal and material; for it is by our spiritual consciousness that we are certain of *knowing that we know*; so that both in the order of nature and of time, our knowledge of spirit takes precedence over matter;

and as a fact of personal experience, we know that the soul in its purest and most vigorous exercises, feels itself as having least in common with matter in any form; and it can think, and feel, and desire, and will, and act, and be acted upon; and though this may be in part through the medium of bodily material organs, yet the mind thinks the most powerfully, when it has least conscious connection with the brain; it sees most clearly, when it is least sensible of the medium of the eye; it hears most acutely, when the ear is least the medium or the barrier between the mind and the objects of which it takes cognizance.

How vain is it, then, for men to deny the existence of a spiritual world to which they belong, on the verge of which they are now standing, and on which they are soon to enter as disembodied spirits! And how many solemn realities are they now surrounded with, even in this world, to which they are insensible! If God were but to lift the veil which envelops their minds, and pierce the darkness which is now opened only by the five inlets of their animal senses, how much knowledge of existence would they find themselves surrounded with, of objects which they cannot now taste, nor smell, nor see, nor hear, nor touch! Even if God were to give us another additional inlet of sensation,—a sixth sense, for example,—how much might we discover of those latent qualities of the material world, which once in a while we get feeble glimpses of; which make electricity the wonder of one age, and electro-magnetism the discovery of another; and which have from time to time exposed some hidden chemical property, the beneficial use of which has lain undiscovered from the creation.

It is not by the discovery of reason, nor the agency of our senses, that we acquire a knowledge of the spiritual world; but they do not stand as evidence against it. And hence we see the use which our reason is to serve us, in matters of faith. Reason is the servant, but not the enemy of faith. The God of nature and of grace is one God, and all his works form one grand harmonious scheme of things. It is safe to use reason as far as its province extends, and where its analogies fail, we are to rest entirely upon the testimony of faith, in what God has revealed in his word.

It is for these reasons that we may draw many beautiful illustrations of the resurrection, from the world around us;

but should use them only as emblems of the hidden things which God has not yet revealed;—and as figures of an existence which extends beyond the impenetrable curtain that hides eternity from time. And when we behold the beauty of spring revived from the blankness and torpidity of winter; when we see the grain deposited and dying in the ground, and then sending up another generation of its own kind and species; when we see the insect egg, existing in one form, and then bringing forth the caterpillar which moves in another sphere from its former, and after its brief existence, making its tomb, and then dying, and after its winter of death, bursting its sepulchre, and coming forth in its new and splendid existence; we see a few of the emblems which lead us to look through nature up to nature's God; and to believe in the sufficiency of that power which first called into being this splendid universe, and sustains all things in perfect harmony and order by his omnipotence; a power which, according to the teaching of the Scriptures, will bid the dead arise, and the prisoners of hope spring aloft to the regions of immortality.

II. In the brief remaining limits for this discourse, it will be only proper for us to refer to a few particulars contained in the Scriptures, for the support of a truth which those Scriptures reveal, and which the power of God will effectually realize. And this Scripture testimony refers to three separate points of this subject:—1, the distinct and independent existence of the soul apart from the body; 2, the actual present existence of the dead, in a state and sphere of action outside of these material regions, and apart from the forms and manifestations of this material world; 3, and the scriptural declaration of a general judgment yet to come.

1. The separate and independent existence and immortality of the soul, apart from the body, is so fully confirmed by reason, so universally admitted by all nations, and so fully understood, even under the partial system of the ancient Hebrew revelation, that laying aside altogether an appeal to the innumerable declarations of the New Testament, the specific proofs of which are open to all, we may simply refer to a few passages in the most ancient parts of the Old Testament revelation. In the first formation of man, it is declared that the body and soul are essentially distinct in their respective qualities, and in all that is essential respect-

ing the existence and nature of each. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—Gen. ii: 7. Solomon speaks of the separation of the soul from the body, and of each returning to its appropriate sphere, and original element. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—Eccl. xii: 7. And at the separation of the soul from the body in death, this royal and inspired preacher asks, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"—Eccl. iii: 21. But not to dwell on a point so obvious, as the separate existence of the soul apart from the body, I remark,

2. That the Scriptures teach the actual present living existence of departed souls.

The Bible does not, indeed, gratify our curiosity by any speculations or revelations concerning matters which lie beyond our present interest and duty. It addresses man simply and mainly with one view, and that is, as a sinner, guilty and miserable; and it shows him the gospel method of recovery; what his duty and happiness consist in, for this life; and reveals the hope of a blessed existence beyond the grave. This is the one single aim to which the Bible addresses its appeals; and like a faithful ambassador from a foreign country, pleading the object of his commission at the court of another nation, the main business is steadily and directly kept in view, and no digressions are made to indulge in speculation, or to gratify an idle curiosity. The ambassador, with his purpose steadily before him, might, nevertheless, make such incidental references to the customs, manners, pursuits and peculiarities of his country, as would give an attentive listener some comparative idea or inference of what the ambassador did not purposely and originally intend to communicate. And so the Bible, while dealing with man as a sinner, pointing out the way of recovery, revealing the great law of duty, and the certain prospect of a future and blessed existence, has given us incidental instruction concerning the present condition of the departed dead, and concerning which there need be no misapprehension. There are many explicit allusions, both in the Old Testament and in the New, to the fact that the departed dead are in a state

of actual living existence, in a spiritual realm, outside and apart from the material system which we now occupy. A few only of these, will I adduce. When the widow's son (xvii of 1 Kings) was dead, the prophet Elijah cried unto the Lord, "O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again; and the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." The body had been completely dead, left to return to the earth as it was, and the soul to the region of spirits; but God caused the soul to come back again, and to be re-united to the lifeless body. Enoch and Elijah were translated directly alive to heaven, and passed at once, soul and body together, into the region of departed spirits, outside of the material atmosphere which envelopes this earth. There are several other instances in the Old Testament, in which the souls of those departed were brought back to a re-union with the bodies they had left; especially the case of the man who was let down into the sepulchre of Elisha, and having touched the bones of the prophet, he revived and stood up on his feet.—2 Kings xiii: 21.

These declarations agree with many more numerous and distinct references, in the *New Testament*, that the souls of the departed dead are immediately transferred into a spiritual region beyond us, where they are actually living now, and where they may either continue to remain, or be bidden to go elsewhere, or to return to a corporeal existence on this earth, if God should so order them. The dying thief prayed to Jesus, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—Luke xxiii: 43. His soul went directly to the living peopled mansions of the departed dead.

The several instances in which Christ brought back the souls of the departed dead, during his earthly ministry, show that the souls which had gone to regions beyond, or outside of, this material system, were living in such manner, that they could be brought directly back. The centurion's daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus, were all completely dead, but their departed living souls were brought directly back. It was not the creation of new souls; for they retained their own proper personality and conscious identity. The body of Lazarus had begun to decompose.

We read, also, of another Lazarus, who when he died was carried by angels to the embrace of Abraham's bosom in heaven. Stephen in his dying moments, called upon God and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And just before he died, the material veil or film which separates the invisible world of spirits, was drawn away, and Stephen looked directly through the deep vault of these visible skies, and it is said, "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."—Acts vii: 55-6.* Here, as Olshansen remarks, "Stephen had an immediate and vivid intuition of Jesus, as he had seen him in his human form."

These instances go to show, what is elsewhere taught in the New Testament, that the living souls of the departed, are oftentimes near at hand; so that, possibly, they may be conscious of what is transpiring among the living inhabitants on the earth. At least they are so situated, that in their invisible state they can be made to re-appear at the bidding of God. In the case of our Saviour's transfiguration, he went up into a high mountain, and was transfigured into a glorified form, in the presence of Peter, James and John; and there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah, talking with them—Matt. xvii: 2; and Luke says, "they appeared in glory, and spake of Christ's decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."—ix: 31. They were evidently in a living, conscious state; and in this state they must therefore have been during all the period since their mortal exit; they needed only to be bidden into visible view, and the veil which separated them from human sight would be drawn aside, and they would appear in their own proper identity.

This truth is still more distinctly taught by our Saviour in connection with our text. When having reproved the error of the Sadducees, for "not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God," he taught the resurrection of the dead; and also, the present living state of departed souls, in these memorable words: "But as touching the resurrection of the

* None of the Apostles, except in the case of Stephen, ever applied the expression, "Son of *Man*," to Christ; it is found only in our Lord's own discourses.—*Neander's Life of Christ*.

dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." These words of Jehovah were spoken (Exodus iii: 6, 15,) to Moses, when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had long been dead. Abraham had been dead three hundred and twenty-nine years, Isaac, two hundred and twenty-four years, and Jacob, a hundred and ninety-eight years. Yet God spoke of being *then* their God; of their being then in a living state, not of their ancient and distant life-time, but now torpid and unconscious state; nor merely of being their God, when, revived hereafter into renewed consciousness, they will remember him as having been their God, once, in the distant past; but the God of those who have somewhere a living, present existence. And therefore, the Saviour adds, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" of those who have *now* an actual existence somewhere in another realm. And this teaching of Christ, establishes not only the doctrine of the resurrection—which it was his first purpose, with the Sadducees, to shew;—but it also shews, most indubitably, that the souls of the departed dead are in the fullest state of conscious existence, at this present time. The time would fail me, if I should attempt to adduce all the explicit and implied declarations of the New Testament, which declare that the separated soul goes at once into a state of living, conscious existence. Paul repeatedly declares, that as soon as Christians die and leave their bodies, they go directly into the presence of Christ, in the spiritual world. "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Therefore we are always confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."—2 Cor. v: 1. And while contemplating his own personal connection and interest, with respect to two worlds, the apostle in some instances seems to have occupied a high station, as on a narrow isthmus separating two oceans, when he says to the Philippians (i: 23), "I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

With respect to Christ's own personal and corporeal departure from earth, and his present existence in a glorified

body, there cannot be a doubt. This is an essential fact in the whole Christian scheme, on which the doctrine of the intercession of Christ as Mediator, and the office work of the Holy Spirit, respectively, depend. The whole epistle to the Hebrews shows, throughout, that Christ is now living in his glorified, crucified human body, exercising sympathy with his people, and having a perfect and intimate knowledge of their present condition, not only by his omniscience as God, but by his actual experience as a man. He was seen passing beyond these visible skies, by all his apostles, and it is said, "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i: 10, 11. This wonderful and solemn truth which is so fully declared elsewhere in the New Testament, we cannot now attempt to illustrate farther; and we need do nothing but take these explicit declarations, just as they stand.

Nor is it proper for us to attempt to relieve this subject from any objections which may be brought against it; or to go into an examination of the scriptural testimony as to the present state of the souls of the departed *wicked* and *ungodly*. The declarations of the Bible are solemnly exact and specific on this point. God threatens to turn the wicked into hell; and we know that many souls of the departed wicked are declared in the Bible to be now in a living state of consciousness, suffering banishment from the presence of God, and reserved for greater suffering at the judgment of the great day. Though the Scriptures do not speak so abundantly, and so much in detail, as to the condition of the departed wicked, as concerning the blessedness of departed saints, still there is no presumption against such proofs, which are all the more fearful, just because the wrath of God, when denounced against men, is let out, drop by drop, in the inspired sentences, like the droppings from the vial of the wrath of God, spoken of in the Apocalypse; while the representation of heaven, like God's mercies themselves, are scattered and lavished like beautiful flowers, along the pages of inspiration. God's thoughts are

thoughts of mercy. But his judicial and final condemnation is fearfully foreboded, by many of those passages, which for a moment draw aside the veil from the gloom of the world of perdition. It was that dark abode of the miserable living, to which Judas was consigned, when the Bible says of him, "*he went to his own place.*"—Acts i: 25. Something like this is intimated by the apostle's allusion (Jude 6) to departed spirits, "reserved into everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;" while the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are expressly said to be thus set forth, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

3. I have, on the present occasion, only a few references to make, as to the scriptural declaration of a general resurrection yet to come; notwithstanding it is the principal part of the subject connected with our Saviour's discourse in the passage before us; and is one of the fundamental principles of the whole gospel scheme. The apostles preached Jesus and the resurrection, as the two capital truths which embraced all that is fundamental in historical Christianity. And when Paul explains the subject of the resurrection, in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, he opens the whole subject, by laying down these two primary fundamental truths: "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." This passage declares the fundamental facts of Christianity; that Christ died, not as a martyr, but as an atoning sacrifice, a vicarious offering for sins; and the fact of his personal resurrection, on which the whole doctrine stands, that the same power which raised Christ from the dead, will re-unite the souls of the departed to spiritual bodies, corporeities, or vehicles, adapted to their eternal existence, after the general judgment.

This is the universal truth declared in the Old Testament, and everywhere affirmed in the New. It was to this that Job looked forward, many centuries before, when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes behold, and not another."—xix: 25-6. The prophetic view of the resur-

rection was revealed in the inspiration of Daniel, when he declared (xii: 2) of "many of them that sleep, that they shall awake from the dust of the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." But what was so plainly revealed in the Old Testament, is demonstrated by still more convincing testimony in the New. And amidst all the ravages of mortality and in view of the tomb, we hear Jesus saying (John xi: 25), "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi: 40. In view of the general judgment, Jesus says, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."—John v: 28-9. The apostles in all their preaching "gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus"—Acts iv: 33; and on all occasions, before Felix, and before all, declared, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."—Acts xxiv: 15.

The solemn truths we have been considering are plain and unequivocal. And the sum of all this testimony is,—not that the souls of some only of the prophets and martyrs go directly to heaven when they die; but that the souls of all departed human beings go at once to that place in the world of spirits for which they are prepared; and that a general judgment is coming, when all departed souls shall be united to spiritual bodies, vehicles or organisms, fitted for their everlasting existence in heaven or in hell. This is the great truth taught us in the inspired demonstration on this subject, in the 15th of 1st Corinthians. The resurrection will be accomplished by the power and agency of Christ,—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” As Adam was the procuring cause of temporal death on all mankind, so the power of Christ shall be the procuring cause of the resurrection of all whose souls have ever been dislodged and separated from their bodies. As there is a natural body fitted for their existence in this

earth, there will be a spiritual body fitted as the organism or vehicle of the soul in the realm of spirits. And the order in which this will take place is thus explicitly declared; all will not sleep in death, but those who are living at the general judgment, will be changed by a process equivalent to death; but death and the resurrection, they will not literally know. And this wondrous and momentous change will come in this manner: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [i. e. Christians living at the time] shall be changed,"—in a way the same as if by death. But this wonderful change will not come upon those living at the time of the resurrection, until those who had first departed in death shall be re-united to their proper bodies. And this we find in the words of the apostle, speaking by the inspiration of God,—(1 Thess. iv: 15)—"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we [Christians] who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [or go before, in point of time] them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall arise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

III. After this appeal to the Scriptures, for the truth of the resurrection, every heart must acknowledge what will be the efficient cause of it. It is "the power of God." How this will be effected, need be no present concern of ours to know. It is only a fool, as the apostle says, who asks the question, "How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come?" It is enough for us to know, that this earth which we occupy, in the midst of the planetary system, was fitted up some fifty-eight and a half centuries ago, for the abode of the present race of men; and God has told us that this race, so recent in its origin, shall not always continue to inhabit this planet, as it now does. It may be blotted out, as other planets have been blotted out; or it may be re-created, as we see and know even in our own times, that new worlds are coming to light, and taking their position amidst the boundless expanse of the universe.

It is no spiritual resurrection already past, which is declared to await the just and the unjust; it is no drapery of solemn metaphor which tells of a judgment yet to come; but the Scriptures directly reveal what the power of God will render effectual, that departed souls, dislodged from their bodies, will be gathered into a spiritual realm, and shall be re-united to proper bodies fitted for receiving the sentence which at the general judgment will fix them forever in changeless blessedness or in eternal misery.

My friends and brethren; you stand on the verge of a spiritual world. You are as near to that world as you are to the event of death; for death will fix you in that state, in which you will continue forever. The gospel now sounds in your ears, to awaken you, before the judgment day will pronounce your eternal sentence,—a sentence which, if it finds you unpardoned and unrenewed, will leave you forever dead in trespasses and in sins. It is now the sound of the everlasting gospel of the grace of God, which brings salvation,—from sin now, and from ruin hereafter;—a salvation which “teaches us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”—Titus ii: 13.

TO THE CHRISTIAN DEATH IS DESIRABLE:

A Sermon, occasioned by the death of Mr. James M. Vaughan, preached in Hampton, Oct. 24th, 1850, by Rev. R. B. C. HOWELL, D. D., of Richmond, Va., and published by request of the Hampton church.

"I would not live *always*."—Job vii: 16.

We have assembled this morning to discharge a melancholly, and most painful duty. Death has entered your cherished circle, and stricken down one of the tallest of your number. Our beloved and lamented brother JAMES M. VAUGHAN sleeps in his grave. In compliance with his dying request, I have come to preach to-day, and to impress, if I may, upon your hearts the solemn considerations this event is so well calculated to awaken. In doing so, I but yield to the dictates of my own feeling. It is to me a sorrowful privilege to mingle my sympathies with yours, while we perform together these last sad offices of respect to the memory of an associate dear to all our hearts. Brother Vaughan was lovely in his life. He was an intrepid leader of Israel's hosts. He was "ready to every good word and work." We thought not of his departure, and knew not ourselves, how much we loved him, until he was snatched from us by the hand of death. He has gone, not however, thank God, without *timely* warning, and *ample* preparation for a change of worlds. If during his life, there was any one sentiment which more than another he fostered in his inmost heart, it was that contained in our text:—"I would not live *always*." Let us then, for a few moments, meditate its import, and obtain, if possible, the instructions it was designed to communicate.

When the good old patriarch exclaimed, "I would not live *always*," did he not intend to assert that to those prepared for a better, the continuation of the present life beyond its ordinary limits, ought not to be coveted? To THE CHRISTIAN DEATH ULTIMATELY BECOMES DESIRABLE.

No instinct is more universal than the love of life. It pervades the heart of *man*, in common with that of all other sentient creatures. That it should strongly influence our

general feelings, and actions, is most natural. Nor is it a sinful feeling. On the contrary, it is highly reasonable and proper, since it prevents any unnecessary exposure to death, sustains us in hours of despondency and wretchedness, prompts to personal defence, and thus contributes essentially to the public safety. And moreover, those also dependent upon us have a right to our continued existence, as long as it can be preserved. Our affection to our families, and our friends, and all the *duties* we owe to *them*, mingle with the natural love of life, and fix the desire of its continuance. Its careful preservation is, therefore, not an instinct only, but becomes consequently, an imperative moral duty. But life has its period as well as its obligations. These over, our love of it should no longer attach us to this world, or render death repulsive. It is our privilege to be prepared, and by Divine grace, able then, cheerfully to welcome the pale messenger which calls us from this to a better world.

But is such a state of mind attainable? Can any one ever say, with cheerful resignation to the Divine will, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly;" "I would not live away?" 'Thanks to our heavenly Father for the assurance that it is. Religion reveals the principle by which, when it is proper, we may conquer the love of life, and achieve a complete victory over death. Divine grace destroys the darkness and loathsomeness of the tomb, tears away the sting of the monster, inspires us with the desire to depart and be with Christ, and fills our hearts with unutterable joy in anticipation of a glorious immortality. Having, as did our dear departed brother, acted *well*, and honorably *finished*, the part assigned us here, we turn our thoughts beyond the grave, to those joys there to be revealed. Thus to the Christian, death becomes desirable. It is the portal that leads to his happy and eternal home. He enters its "dark valley and shadow" undismayed, and speeds him to the throne on high.

Death to the Christian, I remark in the first place, *will soon become desirable on a mere physical account.*

What we should have been physically, had we remained pure and holy, we need not now pause to consider. Holy beings cannot suffer, they are not subject to decay, they cannot die. We should therefore have enjoyed in this world forever, life, and health, and unfading youth. But,—“by

one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We have fallen from our "high estate." Depravity rankles in our heart. Corruption withers and destroys us. Our character and destiny are the reverse of what they would otherwise have been. The history of every man as a fallen being, is substantially the same. He comes into life a helpless sufferer. He struggles through childhood, and youth, towards maturity. Now the world becomes all "beauty to the eye, and music to the ear." Its joys seduce him, its riches task his energies to obtain them, its honors captivate his desires. He passes through the scenes and duties of life. Time flies rapidly away, and age gradually comes upon him. His cheeks are furrowed. His eyes are dim. He bends under the weight of years. His vigor is gone. His enjoyments cease. His friends one after another depart. He falls into second childhood. Other generations have risen up around him. He has no more society here. He is a stranger in his own home. Infirmities press upon him. Life is a burden. See the poor old man, as tottering he stands before you! He raises his sightless eyeballs towards heaven, stretching forth his feeble hands, and with a trembling voice exclaims, O God, "I would not live always!" No,—

"I ask not to stay,
Where storm after storm dashes dark o'er the way.
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here,
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer."

But death to the Christian is desirable on a second account. *Knowledge to a greater extent than is possible in the present state, is necessary to the perfection of our being.*

"Now we see through a glass darkly, but *then* we shall see face to face. Now we know only in part, but *then* shall we know even as also we are known." The medium is at present imperfect, through which we behold objects. Under the most favorable circumstances, our ideas of all things, and especially of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are exceedingly contracted. His works of creation give us some glimpses of his perfections, and the kingdom of his grace affords yet higher developments, but so vast is the field of knowledge, and so feeble are our present powers,

that we are comparatively in darkness. "Who by searching, can find out God? Who can know the Almighty to perfection?" When, however, death shall relieve us from the incumbrance of the flesh, and we shall stand in the presence chamber of the King of kings, so strengthened will be our faculties, so enlarged our conceptions, and so exalted will be our place on high, that we shall see God as he is; not as here, in dim shadows, or through mystic types, but in the splendor, the spirituality, the immensity, and the eternity of his being. Then we shall know him perfectly. Of his glorious designs of grace, how circumscribed at present our conceptions! There we shall learn, and appreciate all their excellency and majesty. And the great and beneficent system of divine providence, here upon earth to us all, how utterly inscrutable! His throne is now covered with clouds and darkness. His dispensations are wrapped in mystery! Of this fact, how striking an illustration have we in the painful event which has called us together to-day. Such a providence we cannot now comprehend. But the heavenly state into which death introduces us, will explain all. There light is perfect. Providences will no more be mysterious; the grace of God will appear in its true aspect; order and beauty will be conspicuous in those very events apparently the most confused; and in what seemed severity and disaster, will be seen true mercy and benevolence. Who then would live always,—thus shrouded in ignorance, and in full view of the world of light and wisdom?

Death to the Christian is, in the third place, desirable, because *in this life his happiness is necessarily incomplete.*

What are the sources to which men of the world ordinarily look for happiness? Fame, power, riches, and the gratification of the natural appetites. But how inadequate are they all to produce the result desired! And even were it otherwise, how uncertain the tenure by which they are held! How soon are we ourselves called hence into a state in which they can no longer be of any avail! We have wants which they cannot appease; woes which they cannot alleviate; cravings which they cannot satisfy; anxieties which they cannot dispel. He who enjoys most of the pleasures of this world, is far less happy than the obscurest of the saints of God. The world did not withhold its smiles from our departed brother. He had all its honors, and distinc-

tions, he ever sought or desired. Wealth poured her treasures into his coffers. Affectionate sons and daughters grew up to bless his home. Friends, ardent and sincere, surrounded him on every hand. As a neighbor, and a citizen, his estimation was but expressed by the sympathies manifested during his sufferings, and by the solemn multitudes who accompanied his remains to the grave. If, however, these had been his only sources of happiness in those hours of suffering and dissolving nature, his death-bed scenes would have been wholly different from what they were. Instead of the glad triumph by which they were characterized, they would have filled him with lamentation, mourning and woe.

The Christian is not of this world, that he should be dependent upon its joys, or fear to leave its precincts. The children of God have sought and found happiness in him. You can look up to him and exclaim,—“Thy *favor* is life, and thy loving kindness is *better* than life.” You are conscious of a personal interest in the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Still your happiness is exceedingly incomplete. Physical infirmities assail you; diseases prey upon your system; your powers fail; the tender and cherished ties of earth are rudely broken; friendships are abused; confidence is crushed; and disappointments beset you on every hand! Clouds often overshadow your spiritual horizon. As travelers you have not yet reached your home. As soldiers you are yet in the midst of the battle. “Many,” many, “are the afflictions even of the righteous.” From all these the hand of death, rude and painful as it is, relieves you and brings you at once into a state of perfect bliss. In that blessed world whither you then go, no pain exists; no griefs enter there; no tears are shed; no beloved friends die; and the deep rapture of tranquility is eternal.

“No chilling wind, nor poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore,
Sickness, and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.”

If such be the contrast between earth and heaven, who would live alway? Our happiness never can be perfect until we go to that blessed world. Death, therefore, to the Christian becomes truly desirable.

The man of God can truly say, "I would not live away," because, fourthly, *while this life continues he is separated from the purest and most enlightened society in the universe.*

How delightful often is social intercourse with dear friends on earth! There are here, notwithstanding all their imperfections, generous hearts, high communings, joyful associations. But how often do these turn into streams of bitterness! In heaven no such casualties occur. Behold that great multitude on high, which no man can number, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! There are the patriarchs and prophets, there are the apostles and martyrs, there are saints,—all the great and good who in every age have served God faithfully. There are many—perhaps a majority—of your own friends and dearest relatives. In their midst is the glorious Redeemer himself in the flesh! How exalted, how unspeakably pure, and bright is that throng! Who does not wish to mingle in their society, their songs, their rapturous conversations? But you cannot join them now. You are yet in the flesh. Would you "live always," and be forever excluded from their intercourse? Our dearest friends are going; our own bodies are wearing out; our minds under the pressure of years will soon become imbecile; other generations are rising up around us to take our places; the glory of heaven awaits us; our work is done. Why then should we wish to linger about the shores of time? No, I would not live away. I would join at length that exalted society on high.

But there is a fifth reason why death is desirable to the Christian. *In this world he is morally and spiritually imperfect, and must look to another for full deliverance.*

To be free from sin, and perfect in holiness, is the constant desire of every renewed heart. Still, how far short of your purpose do you in this life find yourselves? Worldly passions will arise, and reign in your bosoms; your spiritual advancement is retarded by a thousand impediments; and when you would do good, evil is present with you! Grace, it is true, has been conferred; you are recovering from the power of sin; but your victory is not yet complete. Death will sever the last of your chains, and give freedom to your soul. You shall then be as our beloved brother Vaughan

now is, of the number of “the just made perfect.” Made perfect! Yes;—perfect in existence; perfect in purity; perfect in knowledge; perfect in happiness; perfect forever!

“Then who would live alway, away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o’er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns?
There saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet,
While anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smiles of the Lord are the feast of the soul.”

These are some of the reasons why to the Christian, death is desirable; because of the gradual failure of his bodily and mental powers, which would soon render life a burden; because his knowledge while upon earth is greatly limited; because his happiness here is necessarily incomplete; because he is as yet detained from companionship with the best and most exalted society in the universe; and because until death shall deliver him from his bondage he is morally and spiritually imperfect. These sentiments are, I have said, in full accordance with those so long and so warmly cherished by our departed brother. Hence he habitually spoke of death, when it should be the pleasure of God to remove him from earth, as a welcome messenger. From these sources, when the hour of trial came, he derived strength to meet his approach with the calmest security, and most cheerful confidence.

And now a few words more, especially in reference to the history of the lamented dead. Our brother was, as I understand, born in Gloucester county, Virginia, May 11th, 1787. He had lived, consequently, at the time of his death, sixty-three years and seven months. When or how he professed religion, I have not been able to ascertain, but I am assured it was early in life. His affectionate mother was a Christian, and a member of the church before him, and his father united with the people of God not long after. I have learned that with a few exceptions, caused by sickness, he had attended the Dover Association annually for thirty-eight years, and that he looked forward to the late meeting of that body at Grafton, with the deepest interest, expecting there

again to mingle with brethren so long and so dearly loved. His desire in this respect was not gratified. Some forty-eight hours before its assembling, he went up to meet the great Association on high, where, not his brethren on earth were found, but where Semple, and Goodall, and Broaddus, and many others dear to his heart, had gone before him. With these *he rejoiced* in glory, while with the survivors of those great men, *we wept* at that meeting over our irreparable loss.

Soon after his marriage with the desolate one still among us, he became a citizen of this vicinity, where he spent more than thirty-five years of his useful and exemplary life. He found on his arrival this church in feeble existence. What was its condition? A dozen or more obscure and persecuted, but devoted Christians, worshiped in a wooden cabin at the head of this street. In those days it required some force of character and intrepidity to be a Baptist. He hesitated not to cast in his lot among those who followed our Lord Jesus Christ fully, and with their whole heart. He was, not long after, appointed a deacon of the church, which arduous office he filled with untiring fidelity, and singular success, to the day of his death. He fully verified the declaration, that "they that use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." His worth was soon perceived by his fellow-citizens generally, and he was appointed a magistrate, in which capacity he served his county for near thirty years, and up to the time of his departure. He had long been your oldest justice, and chairman of the court, and never did any officer serve his country more faithfully. From the small beginnings in the church to which I have referred, what was he permitted to see? Look around you, and behold this splendid edifice, of which you are justly proud. This is the third that has arisen in Hampton, and each more spacious and elegant than the preceding, and here worship three hundred of your citizens, with eight hundred colored people. Your church numbers to-day eleven hundred members! Behold! What hath God wrought! During all this period of nearly forty years, he acted nobly and faithfully his part, eminently adorning his holy profession. Never was there a more sincere and ardent Christian than he, or one more warmly attached to the cause of our blessed Redeemer.

Nor was he less eminently blessed at home than he was in the church. Gradually arose around him a numerous and beloved family. There were his manly sons, and his affectionate daughters, to bless and honor the age of parents who had reared and educated them with so much care. If a dear and confiding church, a cultivated and affectionate family, an ample competency of this world's goods, and the respect of all his fellow-citizens, could make life desirable, truly might he have wished to live; and for the sake of his family, and his church, he did, as he told you, wish to remain yet for a season; but for himself he felt that it was far "better to depart and be with Christ." Up to within about three weeks of his death, he enjoyed his usual good health. Disease assailed him, and he at once decided that he could not recover. But no alarms agitated him. He felt no misgivings. Calmly he began to "set his house in order," and on Thursday, the 10th instant, between nine and ten o'clock, after the intensest bodily suffering, borne with singular fortitude and resignation, he calmly resigned his soul to God who gave it, and on the following Lord's day you laid his remains in the grave, there to await the sound of the last trumpet. The stricken partner of his life, who survives to deplore his irreparable loss, shared in all his labors, his hopes, and his consolations. And their children,—may their father's God grant them grace to walk in his footsteps, and make their path through life, as his was," that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

With his bereaved and weeping family we cannot, if we would, refrain from mingling our tears, for *they* could love him but little more than he was beloved by us all. The blow which removed him from earth falls upon them with a stunning force, and upon the church also with scarcely less power. We mourn not for him, but for ourselves. He has gone, gone triumphantly. He has passed the fearfulness of "death's dark vale," and now lives with angels in the skies. We are the sufferers. In this church, which from its beginning has been his care, for the building up and spiritual prosperity of which he has toiled so faithfully, for which, in private and in public, he has poured forth so many fervent prayers, and to whose welfare you had accustomed yourselves to think his exertions, his counsels, and his presence, almost essential; who shall supply his place? Who shall

comfort the crushed hearts that bleed in his desolate chambers? To God only, our heavenly Father, may you all look for consolation, and strength, in this hour of deep affliction.

Among the characteristics of our dear departed brother, none was more striking than his unwavering Christian firmness. Having devoted himself to the Redeemer in early life, and read much, and carefully, especially in his Bible, and also availed himself constantly of all the ordinary means of grace, in the sanctuary and elsewhere, he was well instructed in all that pertains to religion. He possessed an enlarged experience, and the doctrines which he cherished were eminently evangelical. No new or ingenious theories of religion, which have been so fatal in many places during the last quarter of a century, captivated him. He sought assiduously for "the old paths," and carefully walked in them. Grace, abounding grace, was his perpetual theme. He leaned alone upon Christ for strength and salvation,— "having no confidence in the flesh." There he was fixed and immoveable.

In his business associations and pursuits, and in all his relations with men, he was, in the strictest, the best and highest sense, a gentleman, and a man of honor. His judgment of men, and things, was singularly accurate, and his integrity no one ever doubted. But business, nor pleasure, nor any other consideration, detained him from his religious duties. If in the prayer meeting, the church meeting, and the services of the Lord's day, he was not present, and ready to perform his part of every duty, you at once knew that he was either sick or absent from home. His contributions for every laudable purpose were always prompt, liberal and hearty. He was ready to labor, and to make any reasonable sacrifice, to promote the cause of Christ in his own church, or to advance anywhere, the interests of a pure and evangelical Christianity. In all these respects, his zeal and fidelity have seldom been surpassed in this, or in any other age, or country.

As he loved the cause of Christ, and gloried in its prosperity, so he rejoiced in the society of his brethren, and delighted to welcome them to the hospitalities of his mansion. Many, very many, especially of the ministry, will long gratefully remember his warm greetings, his solicitude for

their comfort, his affectionate admonitions, his pious encouragements, and the force given to their designs and endeavors by his ready hand and benevolent heart. If on this melancholly occasion I may be allowed to refer to myself, I will say that he was dear to my heart. I first saw him more than twenty-three years since. He then visited me at my residence in Norfolk, with the request that I would come over, and receive and baptize his beloved wife, and her sister, who is now gone to heaven. I came, and the elder portion of this assembly yet remember the happy results which followed. From that hour many were our associations and labors together. We parted here, in this house, at the anniversaries in June last, little imagining that we should meet no more on earth! He has gone first to his reward on high. By me the sainted Vaughan can never be forgotten.

The closing scenes of our beloved brother were such as from a life like this, might have been anticipated. Unmoved and fearless he approached his end. He was indeed joyful in Christ. With him all was bright. Heaven's glories were in full view. While he gazed upon them intently, he comforted, encouraged, and exhorted his weeping wife and children, pointing them for support to the Redeemer. How affectionately did he warn his irreligious neighbors, and entreat them to seek salvation! His beloved church especially occupied his anxious thoughts in his last hours. He was solicitous for your peace and prosperity. To his brethren who approached his bed-side, his exhortations were constant, and most earnest. Of them all this was the purport:—"Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." In the midst of these scenes the messenger came, and his spirit took its flight on high. Thus lived our brother, and thus calmly he died—

" — As sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But fades away into the light of heaven."

Rest sainted brother, until we meet thee there, in thy home of bliss! Yet a little longer, a few more contests upon earth, and we will walk together the starry pavements of the sky.

1. In view of the subject, and the melancholy providence, we have been considering, we are taught most forcibly, the excellency and power of the religion of Christ. We have in proof an illustrious instance showing how eminently it fits you for all the duties of life, how amply it arms you against the fears of death, and how fully it inspires you with courage in every extremity. It does more than all this. When your work on earth is done, it makes even death welcome. It at last introduces you glorified into the presence of your approving God! How infinitely, therefore, beyond all conception, is the value of the religion of Christ!

2. The solemn event which has called us together to-day, utters in the ear of the sinner the awful language of warning.

You are all, dear friends, destined to die. The irrevocable decree has gone forth,—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Every day brings you nearer to the execution of this sentence. You cannot evade it. Your doom is certain. Friends, associates, kindred, are falling around you. The messenger may have been already despatched from the Divine throne, that calls you to the judgment seat. How often has the voice of Vaughan called you from your wanderings, and admonished you of your danger! That voice you will hear no more. It is silent in the grave. “Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” Will you be prepared when that dread summons shall come? O, “seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

3. This solemn event admonishes the church to renewed zeal, prayerfulness and fidelity.

That countenance and person so familiar to you all, and always among the foremost in every duty, you will behold no more on earth. That voice whose fervent tones you have been so long accustomed to hear, cheering you on to active duty, will no more be heard in your ranks. O will you not heed his dying exhortations to peace, to union, to faithfulness in the cause of Christ?

Brethren of the deaconship especially; new and still more arduous duties are yours. Will you not awake to increased prayerfulness and activity in your high office? How otherwise can "the lack of service" of your departed companion be supplied? Your young and excellent pastor will need more than ever, your counsel, your assistance, your warm coöperation. One of the pillars upon which he leaned has been suddenly removed. Brethren, be faithful to your pastor, be faithful to your church, be faithful to each other, be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, sisters, dear friends, while we all humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and "repent in dust and ashes" for our sins, let us here resolve in submissive reliance upon his grace, to return to new obedience, increased exertion, and more persevering toil in the work of salvation. Soon *our* labors upon earth will also have been finished, and we shall follow our beloved brother to our reward above.— "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

"O live the life of prayer,
The life of faith in the meek Son of God,
The life of tireless labor for his sake.
So shall the angel of the covenant bring
Thee to thy home in bliss, a glowing gem,
To shine forever in thy Master's crown."

EDITOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

BELOVED READERS:—

The revolving year has brought us, now, the tenth time, to that point, at which we retrospect the past, and anticipate the future. Let us imitate the example of the merchant, "who settles up his books, takes account of stock," and begins anew; of the husbandman, who grateful for the late harvest, "pitches his crop" for another; of the traveler, who recounts the leagues already traversed, and enquires for the remainder.

Through our contributors, you are our auditory, and we are "The Preacher." If it behooves you to listen to the advice, "Take heed how ye hear;" not less does it concern us, that we "make full proof of our ministry." These words, full of momentous import, are scarcely less applicable to written, than to oral pages. Inasmuch, indeed, as every man has a ministry to perform, a deaconship to serve, they address themselves to every servant of Christ—"Make full proof of thy ministry." Test thy sword, by seeing what it can accomplish—tax thy powers to their very utmost—let it appear what the gospel, through thy agency, is able to do. The pressing wants of a money-loving, pleasure-seeking, soul-forgetting world, demand it. The high claims of God upon us; the tremendous retributions of eternity; and the amazing gracious facilities we possess, demand it. We intend to be "instant in season, out of season;" or as the apostle means, "to press our suit, urgently, whether opportunely or inopportunely."

Our field of labor is widening. Within the past year our list of readers has greatly increased, especially in the Carolinas, in Georgia, in Alabama, in Mississippi, and in Tennessee. And we beg the co-operation of our friends in scattering the good seed everywhere; and praying for the blessing of the Lord of the harvest.

HENRY KEELING.

THE BAPTIST PREACHER.

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No. 2.

CONSECRATION TO CHRIST URGED:

A Sermon, by Rev. Cornelius Tyree, of Virginia.

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.”—2 Cor. v: 15.

The doctrine urged in these words, is consecration to Jesus Christ. In common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, he has a right to the services of mankind, derived from creation and providence; but he has an acquired and peculiar right as Redeemer.

Hence, in this discourse, we design urging on Christians to live according to the new relation between them and their Redeemer—to “live not unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.” To live thus, is to be consecrated to Christ; and whether this mode of life be viewed as an imperative duty or a delightful privilege, we usually enforce it with pleas drawn from the cross. That is our great argument, for activity in the Redeemer’s service.

We intend, however, to adopt on this occasion, another mode of urging the duty in question. Some may think it singular. We hope it will be profitable. We wish to dissuade Christians from living unto themselves, and persuade them to live unto Christ, by answering three comprehensive questions. 1. *For what do we live?* 2. *When do we live?* 3. *Where do we live?*

A word of explanation. To live unto ourselves, is to make the gratification of our personal and social tastes the end of all our plans and conduct. This is selfishness; and the most of other sins are but its developments and modifi-

cations. To live unto Christ, is to make his love the principle, his word the rule, and his honor the end of life. It is to choose our callings, pursue our business, frame our habits, and regulate our actions, from day to day, with a sacred reference to Christ's will and glory. This is scriptural piety; for want of which the conversion of the world lingers: and in order to arouse you to its cultivation, we ask,

1. **FOR WHAT DO WE LIVE?** God created us with noble faculties, fitted up this beautiful world for our abode, and then redeemed us from sin and hell at the cost of infinite pains and sacrifices; and for what end? Why, as redeemed sinners, are we here rather than not here? Not to buy, and sell, and get gain, and then die, leaving all the world unenriched, except six feet by three. To devote our time and exhaust our energies, in scuffling and scrambling for the pelf and pleasures, or even for the honors of this world, is to descend unspeakably beneath our level, and basely forget the claims of our redeeming God. Rest assured, that neither money-seeking nor honor-seeking, constitutes the mission of life. Nor is it to provide for the bodily and intellectual wants of our families. To improve our farms—to build fine houses and furnish them with luxurious couches, plushy carpets, and sumptuous tables—to educate our children and hoard up fortunes for them, are by no means the great work for which God put us here. Some of these are duties, but they are far from being the great duty of life. Some, however, rise a step higher, into the regions of patriotism, and others still higher into the refined atmosphere of benevolence; but neither the patriotism of a Washington nor the benevolence of a Howard comes up to the high ulterior end for which the Son of God ransomed his people. Nor, yet more, is the working out of our own salvation—escaping hell and reaching heaven—the chief vocation of the Christian. True, all other things mentioned, sink into utter insignificance when compared with this. Miss this, and we must shriek away eternity in penal fires hot enough to melt down the sun. But our pardon and sanctification, although infinitely important, are means, not an end. The predominating idea of most Christians, has been merely of being saved themselves, and it is high time the church should be disabused of such contracted views of heaven-born Christianity.—There is something else, about which they should be solicit-

ous, than merely finding an admission into Paradise after death.

What is that *something*? I have an answer to give, that I would have engraved on your hearts, and ring through your memories till the last hour of life. You have been created and redeemed, *that you might serve the mediatorial Jesus in the instrumental conversion of the world.* The state of the case seems to be this: Jesus Christ died on the cross, arose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sent down the Spirit, that he might manifest his glory to the universe in the salvation of sinners. This is the end he died to attain, and is now carrying on in heaven, in all the wide range of his mediatorial government. Now the grand design he has in saving you, Christian, is to bring all your renovated powers to enter on the same pursuit. He would have you enjoy the high honor of being a co-worker with him in saving a lost world. Your first great business is by repentance and faith, to turn to the Sun of Righteousness and catch his light; and then, by an active life, turn to the world of darkness and scatter there the rays which you have received from a brighter sun and a higher sky. The cup of salvation has been put into our hands, with the command that after having drunk of it ourselves, we hand it around to the famishing millions of earth. In brief, we live in a world in which rages the awful disease of sin. Look where you will, and you behold untold numbers sick unto "the second death." Our chief mission on earth, in regard to which every thing else, however important, stands as means to an end, is to convey to them the "saving health" of God's great salvation. This is the true end of life; and so far as the honor of Christ is concerned, better for us never to have been born than to fail in its accomplishment.

And now it would take ten sermons to urge on you this the true purpose of redeemed humanity. Of all modes of living, it is the *grandest* and most *unearthly*. The humble Christian, who, in obedience to his Master's command, and in imitation of his Master's example, seeks the conversion of souls at home and abroad, does a work before which the deeds of patriots and scholars pale into insignificance. The works of the latter will soon be forgotten, while those of the former will last long after the earth shall have been fuel for the last conflagration. It is a mode of life *accessible to all*

classes. The poor, obscure saint, with absolutely nothing but his good name, can as really promote the world's conversion as did Paul or Luther. And moreover, of all the ways to live, this is the most *Christ-like*. Living unto ourselves is neither saint-like nor angel-like, much less Christ-like; whereas the nearest approximation we have in this world to the benevolent Jesus—the most perfect reduplication of his stainless character, is the Christian who feels most, prays most, and toils most, to convey “the gospel to every creature.” And yet more, of all ways to *evinced the divinity of Christianity*, earnestness for the salvation of others, is the most efficacious. Let the doctrines of the gospel assume in the lives of professors an incarnate form, and move about with looks of love and deeds of goodness, and there will be no more necessity to write books and preach sermons to prove the truth of our religion; the demon of infidelity will be shamed back to the bottomless pit; and there will go abroad among mankind a deep and practical persuasion that Christianity is heaven-born and heaven-bound. And furthermore, living unto Christ is of all modes of life, most *promotive of man's weal*. He who does all in his power to diffuse the gospel, not only does most to civilize, moralize and socialize mankind, but instrumentally lessens the number that will wail in hell and augments the number that will through eternity hymn the mighty song of redemption. And what is still more to the point, the word of God and experience show that living thus is the best way to *promote vigorous, comforting piety in our own souls*. Were our own sanctification and fitness for the upper kingdom the grand end of religious life, the best way of promoting it is to care and do for the salvation of others. The most effectual means of dispelling darkness from our own minds, is to strive to dispel it from other minds and other lands. And more encouraging than all yet, he who adopts for his motto, “I live unto Christ,” *does more for the honor of Christ* than any other created being. He does what angels can only gaze on and rejoice over. He can convert a soul from the error of his way, which is one privilege he has over the redeemed in heaven. Nor are even these all the priceless blessings that result from the mode of life we are recommending. There is one way of life that more certainly than any other *secures a peaceful and triumphant death*:

and that is living *to* Jesus and *for* Jesus. When such cross the dark valley, Jesus will be with them, holding with one hand the anchor of hope, and with the other pointing the way to heaven. And after death comes the judgment: that day of fire and storm when we shall be put upon our last trial and judged, not according to our creeds or joys, but according to the deeds done in the body. Now who in the hour of death will be more likely to lean his head upon the bosom of his Lord, and face the judgment seat without paleness and trembling—who will be more likely to receive the “well done” of the final Judge, and then shine forever as a star in the firmament of the third heavens, than he who bore the heat and burthen of the day in seeking to save souls and honor God? None.

This prepares us to ask,

II. WHEN DO WE LIVE? Not under the Old Testament dispensation, when the religion of God was unaggressive—not under the ages of pagan and papal darkness, when the redeemed could with impunity do nothing but take care of their own souls—not under the millennial glory and conquest, when the church may rest from her labors and rejoice over a world converted to Christ—but in the middle of the nineteenth century; the most important period that has yet occurred, perhaps, since the death of Christ.

1. *We live in an age of increasing light.* Whether the 1,260 years spoken of by David and St. John as the period that should intervene between the rise and downfall of Popery, commenced, according to the opinion of Faber, in the year 606, under the reign of Phocas; or not till the reign of Justinian as contended by Freer and Irving; or not till the papal throne arose to its full development under the reign of Charlemagne, when the Roman pontiff was made secular as well as spiritual sovereign, according to the opinion of Bishop Newton and Sir Isaac Newton, no one can tell.

The tenor of the prophecies and the signs of the times justify us, however, in saying that the clock of prophecy and providence are setting in harmony to strike the eleventh hour of the world's bondage and misery. We live at least during the Saturday evening of time. The great Sabbath of the world's redemption draweth on. How many years will intervene between the one and the other, no one, we

believe, has sufficient skill in prophetic arithmetic and mystic symbols to tell. Nor is this necessary. We know enough to know that we are at least entering on the dawn of that day, which glowed under the pencil of enraptured prophets, which martyrs desired to see, and which is watched by millions of eager eyes from heaven. The Bible and nature are so explaining each other, as to prove that they have one and the same author. Prophecies are becoming facts, and those facts are convincing the world that the book that contains those prophecies, is from God. Physical science and Christianity are mutually clearing up, and evincing the truth of each other. Revolutions, civil and religious, are opening the way for the more thorough and extensive diffusion of the gospel, and the gospel is instilling into the popular mind great principles, which are ripening again into revolutions, which revolutions will perhaps sweep away the grand barriers to the coming of the millennial glory; and if so, is this the time for the redeemed to sleep in ignoble sloth, or exhaust their energies in living for selfish ends? He who can live unto himself amid such a flood of light, on truth, on duty, on privilege, should have come on the stage during the by-gone ages of darkness.

2. *We live in an age pre-eminently practical and utilitarian in its character.* Energy, activity and directness, characterize every department of human enterprise. Religion also is up and doing. In record, Christianity has triumphed over infidelity in all its ancient and modern forms. The world have had enough of the religion of forms, creeds and ceremonies, without being made the better by them. In order to their becoming "altogether" Christians, mankind have long been demanding of the church example as well as precept, practice as well as faith. This demand, in the place of which the world will receive nothing else, the Christians of this age are beginning to meet. The doctrines that men are exposed to an endless hell—that Christ died to save them—that in order to their being saved, the gospel must be conveyed to them, and that men must repent of their sins and believe it—that death is followed by the judgment, and judgment by a reverseless doom in hell, or changeless bliss in heaven—are, in a good measure, beginning to assert themselves, not only in creeds, books and sermons, but in the corresponding earnest efforts of professing

Christians. Both sinner and saint are finding out what the word of God has always taught, that self-denying exertion is as essential a part of Christianity as faith and baptism.—The day has come when earth as well as heaven, pronounces that man a Christian, only in name, who, amid his plenty, composedly looks on, while souls by thousands a day, are sinking down to hell, without putting forth an effort or giving a dollar to arrest the mighty ruin. To call such self-indulgers Christians, were as great a solecism as to speak of a sober drunkard, an honest thief, a brave coward, or a loyal rebel. Now, my brethren, the activity and earnestness around you are an imperative call to each of us, to rend the veil from our eyes, tear the world from our hearts, and arise to life and action. This call we cannot disobey with impunity. The saints of the dark ages, and our fathers now in eternity, may have slumbered with impunity, but we of this day cannot do it without forfeiting all claim to the Christian name.

3. *We live in an age of peculiar opportunities for Christian usefulness.* Never before did as many facilities present themselves to the church for conveying the gospel to the destitute. Our means for blessing the world are greater than those possessed by the apostles.

The advance of popular freedom and education; the unrestrained commercial intercourse between the nations of the earth; steam-ships, like floating bridges across oceans, and railroads like rivers across continents; the improved speed and lessened expense of traveling; the newly developed powers of the press; together with the almost universal prevalence of the English language; are but so many channels through which we may let flow out, in divergent streams, "the water of life."

The saints of other ages were, to a great extent, cut off from the rest of the world. Impassable seas and deserts, and unknown languages, were to them physical impossibilities in the way of converting the heathen; and hence they were excusable. Far different with us. The inventions of art and the discoveries of science, have opened ways through which we can reach and convert those who live on the other side of the globe, with as much ease as though they lived at our doors. The God of providence has so ordered matters, that by staying home and lifting up our hands in prayer,

and stretching them forth with our alms, we can as really touch and quicken the wheels of the machine of missions in heathen lands, as instrumentally convert sinners in China and Africa, as though we could converse with them and kneel with them in prayer; and if so, how loudly are we called on to stand up like men upon whom the vows of God rest, and live unto Jesus by exerting our powers mortal and immortal, in sending the gospel to every creature! In view of these many wide open doors of usefulness, how dark does the sin of uncaring selfishness appear! how treasonable lounging sloth!

4. *Not only do we live in an age of great facilities for doing good, but in an age of great readiness to receive the Christian religion.* Never before was there among the ungodly in Christendom a deeper and more wide spread appreciation of the religion of the Bible.

But encouragements of this kind are seen especially in the lands of heathenism. There is not now a single portion of the globe which the prudent missionary may not approach and obtain some degree of success. The four great errors, *Judaism, Mahometanism, Heathenism and Popery*, are losing their deadly grasp on the human mind, and the victims of these systems of darkness are sighing for something newer and better. The Jews are becoming tired of waiting for their long expected Messiah, and many of them are turning their faces to the holy land. *Popery*, that masterpiece of the wisdom from beneath, that has for ages held two hundred millions of the human family spell-bound in mental and moral night, is, in its very stronghold, losing its fatal charms; and its adherents are struggling for light and calling for the Bible. *Mahometanism*, that has so long tormented man and dishonored God, seems smitten by an invisible hand with decay and death. Africa, wronged, bleeding Africa, is waking up from the slumber of centuries and is "stretching forth her hand unto God." China, that has so long walled out the missionary and the Bible, stands to welcome the gospel. Brahmins are forsaking their temples and their libations of human blood, and are calling on the church for the book that tells of Jesus Christ and heaven. Nay, more: the religious establishments; the corrupt formalism and churchism of modern Europe, one of the greatest barriers in the way of the spread of pure Christian-

ity, are being brushed away by the hand of God, and its moral soil has been ploughed up by heaven's thunderbolt, so that an evangelical ministry may go forth and scatter "the good seed of the kingdom." In fine, it may be said, that hundreds of thousands of heathen are standing on the threshold of their temples of idolatry, ready to quit them forever, and embrace the Christian religion. From the destitute regions of our own land; from the uttermost parts of the earth; from the wilderness; from the islands of the sea; from nations till lately unknown to civilized man, comes up to the church, the imploring Macedonian cry—thousands perishing while they utter it—saying, stay at your homes, but send us the gospel to smoothe the path of life, and the bed of death. And can we hear their cries and sleep? If we have such favorable opportunities for making known the gospel; and if the benighted nations of the earth are in such crying need of it—if to them an unknown gospel is no gospel, an unheard of Saviour, no Saviour, then how solemn and subduing the obligation we are under, to consecrate ourselves to Christ, in prayers and toils, to send them the gospel. For this purpose, should be inscribed on all our possessions and talents, "Sacred to Christ."

5. *We live in an age of unwonted earnestness and enterprise, among both the friends and foes of Christ.* The church ever since the year 1792, when the series of modern missions commenced, has been waking up from her long sleep, and putting forth efforts for the world's conversion. Up to that period, Zion acted on the defensive. She was the assailed party. Her motto was *stand*. But for the last fifty years she has been aggressive. She has stormed many of the outposts of the prince of darkness; but the shock of battle is yet to come. The stronghold of the god of this world, is yet to be taken. And from the signs of the times, the rapidly shifting scenes of Providence, we suppose that the opposing ranks of light and darkness, are marshaling their hosts for the final struggle. Whether, as some think, in this age and in this land, the great battle of Armageddon is to be fought, we will not say; but from the political, moral and religious condition of the world, we seem to hear the Captain of our salvation and the prince of darkness, summoning their hosts for some great conflict. Look over the opposing ranks as they are forming. See the mighty regi-

ments of infidelity, intemperance, error, formalism, popery, fanaticism, Mahometanism and paganism; and over all this numerous, dark, appalling host, waves the black banner of Apollyon. On the other hand, see the comparatively small band of Christ's faithful soldiers, made up of the regiments of tract, temperance, publication, Bible, and missionary societies; and over them all waves the white banner of the Prince of Peace. The point at issue is, whether this world shall remain hell's gloomy province, or be converted back to the Divine throne.

In other words, on the one side, the devil with his nameless agents, is earnestly and most successfully engaged in ruining souls. He commenced his mission of darkness in our world, soon after man was created. Go where you will, and you meet his apostles, and see the woful fruits of their success. Aided by not only his legions of fallen associates, but by more than seven hundred millions of Adam's family, he is busily seeking to drive the ploughshare of ruin over this once fair heritage of God, and lead down to his own dark dwelling, all the nations, tribes and families of our globe.

Then see a goodly number of Christians, seeking under God, to defeat the aim of hell, and lead souls at home and abroad, to Christ and to heaven.

Now tell me, ye who have been washed in blood divine, which side will you take? Under which banner will you fight? Recollect that neither side will tolerate neutrality. Do the sacrifices and toils of this holy war alarm you? Do you feel like retreating, and hiding yourself and talents in the earth? If so, we are bold to say, that it will be best for all concerned, for you to have your name stricken out of the baptismal register, and lay off the sacred badge of your profession. We hope, however, better things, and implore you, that in view of the activity of hell in ruining souls, and of heaven in saving them, you review the import of a profession of religion, and dedicate anew yourselves to him who ransomed your souls by his dreadful agonies on the cross.

This prepares us for our third and closing question:

III. WHERE DO WE LIVE? In what world? We live in a world which has been distinguished from all other worlds, by being selected as the theatre of redemption. We

dwell on a planet that has been consecrated by being made the birth, death and burial-place of the Son of God. We tread the very battle-plain on which He conquered hell and achieved the victory of man's redemption. We live amid the memorials of his atoning acts. We tread the soil that has been wet with his blood, and breathe the air that has been agitated with his sighs. And is this the place to be actionless and self-seeking? Shall we hug our ease on the very ground stained with the blood of Jesus, and where he is training up a people for glory? No, no! let the inhabitants of Mercury, Saturn and Herschel, and all the other worlds, live unto themselves, but not us who live in such a world as this.

Where? In a world in which immortal beings are constantly ending their probation, and having their histories sealed up for the judgment. Hundreds of souls, each of which is worth more than the whole material universe, are hourly losing or winning heaven. Each succeeding wave of time bears off some to the eternal damnation of hell, and others to the undying bliss of heaven. And what is still more arousing, is that our agency is greatly concerned in working out one or the other of these results;—so much so, that our every movement is watched by both heaven and hell. Christian, fold your arms in selfish ease, and you cause exultation in the ranks of darkness. Be indolent and indifferent, and all hell will grin applause. Bestir yourselves for Christ and souls, and angels will tune their harps afresh, and you will give joy to all good beings in all worlds. In a world of such scenes, and under the eyes of such observers, have we any time to lose?

Where do *we* live? In the most favored part of this most favored world. Ascend the mount of vision, and look abroad over our globe. See Asia, and excepting the missionary stations that twinkle in the gloom, O how dark! Yonder nearer by, behold Africa! What a continent of depravity! And even Europe, a solitary kingdom or two excepted, how shrouded with papal night. From your post of observation, survey the whole moral landscape of our earth, and you will be convinced, that the sun in his journey around our planet, does not shine upon a nation or a tribe for whom God has done as much physically, politically and religiously, as he has for *us*. Ours is the home and the hope of the world, politically and religiously.

You have seen then the *end*, the *time*, and the *place* of the Christian's life; and who that loves Christ and his cause, does not thank God that he was not born in other ages, and in other lands? To live for such an end, in such an age, and in such a world, is indeed a rich birthright. If by living for selfish ends, we sell it for naught, we must meet at the day of reckoning, the upbraidings of other less favored ages and lands. To us, my brethren, much has been given; of us, much will be required. Our *end*, *time* and *place* of life, clothe us with a responsibility under which we may well tremble. Upon us "the ends of the world are come." On us the eager eyes of all heaven, and the imploring eyes of all earth are fixed. To live *now*, and to live *here*, shuts us up to the alternative of either blasting the world by our neglect, or blessing it by our fidelity. The world is to be greatly bettered or worsted by our living in it. By our prayers and zeal, hell will be spoiled of some of its prey, or by our apathy glutted fuller with victims. Go stand by the cross and view Jesus, as he ransoms you from sin and hell, and then look forward to the great judgment day, when he will require of you an account of your "talents," and say which alternative shall be yours.

I only add in closing, that what we have said, applies with great force to the unconverted, as well as to the converted. If a heathen by hearing a single sermon incurs a responsibility, where is the arithmetic that can calculate the vast accumulation of responsibility resting on the impenitent of this age and this land? Unspeakably better to have gone down to hell three thousand years ago, from some pagan land. To reject the gospel *now*, and *here*, is a sin that will in the day of judgment, throw all other sins into the shade. If there be for any a seven-fold hell, it is for such. Think of this, ye thoughtless sons of men, and go to Jesus. Go now. Amen!

THE POWER OF MAN TO OBEY THE GOSPEL:

A Sermon, by Rev. EDWARD BAPTIST, of Alabama.

“*And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*”—John v: 40.

These words were addressed by the blessed Saviour to the unbelieving Jews. They are equally applicable to every impenitent sinner. In confirmation of his divine mission and sonship, he appealed to the gracious and glorious works he performed, declaring also that he was constituted sole judge of the universe, as well as Saviour of the world; that he possessed in himself the issues of life and spring of happiness, and that he would quicken, re-animate and restore, from all the disastrous ruins of the fall, every penitent, believing sinner; but they rejected the testimony; they refused the offer; they would not come to him for life. To come to Christ is to believe in him. It is a metaphorical expression in common use, wherein the faculties of the human mind are represented by certain actions of the body. In the chapter from which our text is selected, faith is represented by hearing: “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that *hear* shall live. Sometimes faith is represented by seeing: “Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved.” Sometimes by receiving Christ, as ye would an offer or gift: “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Sometimes by walking: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “And ye will not come to me for life.” To come to Christ, therefore, is to believe in Him with penitent hearts. It is to be cordially willing to be saved by Him, according to the provisions and precepts of the gospel: “For the Spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say *come*; and let him that is athirst *come*; and whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely.” Here it is evident, that to be *willing* is to *come*. But can the sinner come to Christ?

Has he power to repent and believe the gospel? Most assuredly he has. There is no other obstacle than his own unwillingness. For "whosoever *will* let him take;" "and ye *will not* come to me for life." But does not the Saviour himself say, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him?" Yes. But what is meant by this *cannot*, and the *drawing influence* which is said to overcome it? Is the former want of power or of will; and the latter, is it the application of physical force or of moral suasion; of spiritual influence, that always deals with the heart and rectifies the will. Terms are used in the Bible and all other works, as well as in common parlance, either in a literal or an analogical sense. For instance, you desire a favor of your neighbor, it may be the loan of a thousand dollars; he replies, I cannot lend it. Why? Have you not the money? Yes; but I cannot lend it. Here is no misunderstanding. The term is not used literally, implying want of power, for he acknowledges the means; but analogically, signifying want of will or disposition. It is the most forcible method of expressing his determination not to comply. So also in the Bible, when the invited guests were bidden to the marriage feast, they all began to urge their different excuses: one had purchased a farm, and must go and see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go and prove them, or try them, to see if they would work; but the last cut the matter short by saying, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Now this man did not intend to assert that the dear partner of his choice had confined his person with chains of brass or fetters of iron, but that he was held by the soft and silken cords of love. He could not come, that is, he did not choose to leave her. Let us now return to the passage of scripture under consideration. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him" What is the impediment? Is it want of power? Suppose his powers increased tenfold, while his will, his disposition remained the same, would he come? Would not his sinful passions restrain him? Let us now suppose his powers remained the same, but his will, his disposition of heart, is changed to love Christ supremely, what hinders his coming? He has already come. Not coerced by physical force, but drawn, gently and sweetly drawn, or inclined by moral suasion, by spiritual influence,

by cords of redeeming love. There are other passages of scripture, which seem to conflict with our text, but as the one already explained is the most forcible, what we have said in regard to it, will apply to all the rest.

We affirm, therefore, that the sinner's damnation results from his own unwillingness to be saved by Jesus Christ on the terms of the gospel. He has ample power to prevent such a result, if he would employ it as the Bible directs in coming to Christ for life; and he can come; he can repent, and believe the gospel. He can obey every command, and perform every duty enjoined upon him, acceptably to God, if he were disposed to do so. By disposed, we do not mean a fleeting transient wish; but an earnestness of mind, a fixedness of purpose, a heart devoted to the object. Upon this power to perform every duty, depends his entire responsibility. If he were unable to obey the gospel in all the length and breadth of its precepts, he would stand excused in the estimation of God and man. But it is because he can and will not do it, that his condemnation is so justly merited and so awfully certain. 'This whets the sword of divine wrath; this deepens the gloom of endless despair; no cheering ray of hope can ever penetrate his dark abode, but a bowless cloud of divine indignation, a starless night of inconceivable horror, forever encircle his guilty soul.

We are here met with this objection: How can the sinner repent and believe? Are not repentance and faith Christian graces bestowed from heaven? Is not Christ exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance as well as remission of sins, and is not faith the gift of God? Yes. These are undoubted truths, precious truths, glorious truths; without them no guilty son of Adam would ever enter heaven. And while we affirm that every sinner who hears the gospel can obey it, in all its requirements, at all times, and in all places, *if he would*, without divine aid; yet we as positively assert, that no person ever did or ever will come to Christ in obedience to the gospel, without being inclined thereto by the Holy Spirit. The reason is, that two things are necessary to the performance of every action, whether right or wrong, social, civil or religious, viz: power and disposition. The presence of both will insure the act; the absence of either will certainly defeat it. Now while the sinner possesses the former, the power to serve God, he has not the latter, the

disposition to do so. This, however, forms no excuse. It is his fault, his sin, his depravity of heart. How precious, then, must be that grace which stoops so low to reach this wretched heart, inclining it to Christ. Here we also see how grace operates in the salvation of a sinner. Not in the bestowment of new powers, or the increase of those already possessed: he needs them not; but in the renewal of his heart, that is, the production of a right disposition, which will lead him to Christ, "the way, the truth and the life," to employ all his powers in his service. This sentiment accords with the general tenor of scripture, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," said Jehovah to his Son. Not able, they were able before; but *willing*, they were unwilling to come to Christ. And Jesus said to the citizens of Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth her brood under her wings, and ye would not." "Ye would none of my counsel, ye despised all my reproofs." However accessible and widely unfolded may be the door of mercy; however endearing and sweetly constraining may be the invitations of gospel grace, yet sinners are so wedded to their sins, they will not forsake them to enter in. No, "this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Their rejection of the gospel method of salvation is wholly voluntary. For "the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes they have closed*; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and should convert or turn, and I should heal them." Deeply involved in guilt and ruin must that sinner be, who, deaf to all the kind, the melting, the moving accents of redeeming love; blind to the beauties of truth and the glories of heaven, shall break through all these barriers of mercy and of grace, and plunge into interminable woe.

While we maintain that every sinner who hears the gospel has ample power to obey it, that he can perform every duty and obey every command acceptably to God, irrespective of divine aid; yet we as positively affirm, that he is wholly unable to save himself. This is not his duty; it is nowhere commanded in the Bible; but he is positively forbidden to attempt it, and commanded to come to Christ to save him.

Yet this is the rock upon which thousands wreck their souls; their eternal all. Instead of coming directly to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation—"the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"—they devise various methods to save themselves, and fail, totally fail. Some of them discover their mistake when too late to remedy it; yes, eternally too late. Like Israel of old, they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, for Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to every one that believeth: "He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." And on this subject Christ himself declared "without me ye can do nothing." If this be the only method of saving sinners, revealed by God in the gospel of his Son, presumptuous the hope and daring the confidence reposed in any other. From the foregoing arguments, what judgment shall we form of that sort of instruction from the pulpit or the press, which leads sinners to believe they cannot perform their duties, they cannot repent and believe the gospel, they could as easily create a world as turn and come to Christ; and they must wait God's time? Did the apostles thus teach when they commanded all men to repent and believe the gospel; repent or perish; believe or be damned; and declared now is the accepted time? Sinners are too apt to defer this important matter to a more convenient season, without encouragement from the pulpit or the press to do so. This kind of instruction lulls them to sleep in a state of carnal security; folding their arms they will wait God's time to convert them, and the inference is, whether expressed or not, that if they shall never become converted, it will not be their fault, they cannot convert themselves. In the name of our heavenly Master, I would ask, if it be not the sinner's fault that he does not obey the command of God and come to Christ, whose fault is it? Whose fault is it that he should for one day or one hour longer rebel against his Maker? There is danger of falling into error equally fatal from the presumptuous abuse of power. The sinner may conclude, I can obey the gospel when I choose, therefore I will defer it to a future period. I will make it a death-bed transaction. Let me ask, why do you not obey it now? Is it not because you are unwilling? Are you sure you will be more willing

at a future day? Yet if this unwillingness continue, it will certainly damn you forever, in spite of all your powers; and if they were increased an hundred fold and misemployed, it would only aggravate your guilt and condemnation; will your continuance in sin give you a relish for holiness and duty? Will your daily rebellion against the government of God qualify you to submit to his authority and delight in his service? Perverse reasoning! "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." You are daily sowing to the one or the other, and upon your present choice may depend under God the completion of your eternal destiny. However exalted may be your powers, though they be those of an angel, yet so perverse is your disposition, and obstinate your will, and deeply depraved your heart, that if you are ever saved, it must be by divine grace; sheer grace; unmerited favor; God's Holy Spirit must save you from yourselves or you are eternally undone. Come now to Christ, while God commands, the Saviour calls, invites, entreats.

"See how he stands with open arms,
He smiles and bids you come,
Guilt holds you back and fear alarms,
But see there yet is room.

Room in his gracious, bleeding heart,
Here love and pity meet,
Nor will he bid that soul depart
That trembles at his feet."

Come trembling sinner, come to-day; you have long tried the world, and found it destitute of fidelity. It flattered you with the accomplishment of every thing desirable, riches, honor, pleasure, happiness. It has deceived you, and you are still unhappy. Come, see if your God will not be more faithful to his promises. It is owing to the seductive influence of the world, that men lose sight of the one thing needful. Some allowance perhaps should be made for youth, that boiling season of life, when all the passions are impetuous; when the attractions of the world are so intimately felt, and so naturally obeyed. But to see a man as he declines from his meridian, burning fiercer and fiercer for

that world he must shortly leave, shocking the very wrinkles upon his brow by an insatiable desire for more wealth and distinction, sacrificing his glorious reversionary hopes for acquisitions and attractions that are upon the point of being torn from him by the rude hand of death, promising himself a sort of immortality here so long as he beholds a single human being one step nearer the grave than himself, is such a horrible perversion of reason and religion, as places it beyond the extraordinary exertion of divine grace to enlighten, sanctify and save him. But whatever length of days we promise ourselves, this much we all know, that go we must; and what is perhaps equally certain, at a time when we least expect it. There are not wanting examples of sudden death, in all the flower of youth and vigor of health; in the very bosom of security, to awaken our attention. The sword is suspended over our heads by an attenuated thread, and many causes, internal and external, conspire to dis sever it, and leave us not a moment for reflection. Admitting that a lot so terrible is the fate of few, it does not render us a whit the more secure from surprise. There is not one person in a thousand, who, when brought to a bed of sickness, can induce himself to believe, however threatening his disease, that it will prove fatal to him. No! wedded to this miserable scene of existence, our hopes are all afloat to the very last. The understanding, though clear as day on every other subject, throws not a solitary ray on the nature of his condition, however alarming. And too often it happens at that awful moment every object around us, our nearest relations and dearest friends, all conspire to uphold this state of delusion. They shudder for us in their hearts; yet when they approach our sick beds, they talk to us of recovering with their lips, from a principle of mistaken, I had almost said of barbarious lenity. The most important of all truths is withheld, till it is of little use to impart it. The consequence is obvious. We are surprised—fatally surprised! Our eyes are only opened when about to be closed in the sleep of death. An instant of reflection to be made the most of; to be divided between the adjustment of our temporal matters and the vast concerns of eternity! An instant of reflection! Just God, to bewail an entire life of disorder; to inspire faith the most lively, hope the most firm, love the most pure. An instant of reflection to a poor, miserable

sinner, whom vice may have infected to the marrow of his bones, when reason is half eclipsed, and all the faculties of the mind are palsied by the strong grasp of death. Ah, my brethren, terrible is the fate of those who are roused from a long and criminal security by the sword of Divine Justice already gleaming in their eyes. If one truth in religion is more frequently and urgently pressed home upon us than the rest, it is this: that as men live, so they generally die. Few among us, I am sure, but live in the intention of throwing an interval of most serious reflection between the world and the grave. Let me, however, faithfully warn you on this point. It is not given to man to bestow his heart and affections on the present world and recall them any moment. All habits increase by indulgence; every day will draw their chains closer and stronger around you. It is the property of years to give a deep, wide and immovable root to all the passions. The deeper the bed of the torrent, the more difficult to change its course; the older the wound, the more painful the remedy and desperate the cure. How impressive the language of holy writ: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots, then may they who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well."

We may know how far any rooted vice will yield to age, by that propensity in man which years might naturally be expected to extinguish. Who ever knew a professed libertine that did not grow more unblushingly scandalous and incorrigible in his decline, when his head was bleached with the frosts of many winters, like those burning mountains that contain within their bowels stores of unextinguishable fires, beneath crowns of perpetual snow? The extreme folly, guilt and danger of trusting to the future, is verified by a lamentable string of experiments. But although no danger be apprehended, while the thunders of heaven may roll at a distance, yet when they shall collect over your heads in a cloud dark and dense, threatening destruction, we may be fatally convinced that faith in the Redeemer, attested by a well spent life, is the only conductor that can avert the bolt. Let us consider, time waits for no man, asleep or awake, it is ever on the way, and death is hastening on. And it is to the incomprehensible oblivion of our mortality that the world owes all its fascinations. Observe for what man toils; observe what it often costs him to become

rich and great. Dismal vicissitudes of hope and disappointment! Often, all that can degrade the dignity of his nature and offend his God. Study the matter of the pedestal and the instability of the statue. Scarce is it erected, scarce presented to the stare of the multitude, when death, starting like a massy fragment or huge avalanche from the summit of a mountain, dashes the proud Colossus into dust. Where now is the fancied fruit of all his toil? Where the miserable, deluded being, who flattered himself that he had "laid up much goods for many years?" He is gone, my brethren, gone to his awful account. He stands, a naked victim, trembling in the presence of the living God.

Ah! my brethren, the final catastrophe of all human passions is rapid as it is awful. Fancy yourselves stretched upon that bed from which you will never arise, and the reflection will exhibit, like a faithful mirror, "what shadows we are and what shadows we pursue." Happy they, who meet their great inevitable change, full of days and full of piety; unhappy they who meet it, but to tremble and despair. Then it is man learns wisdom when too late; then it is every thing will forsake him but his virtues and his crimes. To him the world is past; riches, honors, pleasure, glory, all vanished like the morning cloud, never to return. And all that this great globe inherits, will not afford him at that tremendous hour, as much consolation as the recollection of having given but a cup of cold water to a child of wretchedness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

AMUSEMENTS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

That this subject is not beyond the range of our legitimate animadversions, is obvious to those acquainted with the contents of the Religious Periodical Press generally, within the last few months. We therefore, in our present number, venture a few remarks touching the importance and difficulty of the subject, partly in the hope of inducing other clear heads and powerful pens in addition to those that have already entered the discussion, to give us their light. For, whether the love of amusement is an original element of sinless human nature, perverted by the fall; or whether it is

one of the infirmities created by the apostacy; one thing is certain, that it threatens to engulf both the church and the world. Before her formidable march, business falls prostrate; and in furtherance of many of their schemes of beneficence, churches are suppliants at her feet.

For ourselves, personally, we had been content during half a century, to consider this subject as comprehending two distinct classes of things: some harmless, others injurious: but all easily disposed of, each upon its own merits, by the intelligent and the good. We now think quite differently. And if we mistake not the signs of the times, a crisis is near, when in this department of moral conduct, a distincter line must be drawn between lawful and unlawful. Where this line should be, is the question that puzzles us. We have looked at the subject, until we are amazed and bewildered. All Asia seems devoted to sky-rockets, kites, dancing, and cards. Africa is one vast arena of libidinous dance. Europe finds pleasure in the theatre, the opera, the cock-fight, and the bull-fight. And in our own beloved America, and even among professing Christians, we sometimes build churches by tea-parties and flirtations, and support orphans by raffles.

We almost think this is the very ground on which the great battle between the world and the church is to be fought. If it is not here, where is it? It is not in the business transactions of life: for these are common ground. The ordinary pursuits of life are not only innocent, but essential to Christianity. Here the believer and the unbeliever follow the same vocation, in itself harmless: but made sin to the one, because in it he acts without reference to God; and righteousness to the other, because he acknowledges God in all his ways that his paths may be directed by Him. We repeat the question, if it is not here, where is it? If it is not in the ordinary business transactions of life, neither is it in the external observance of the Lord's day, or the exercises of public worship. Here, too, is common ground. Between the mere worldling, who has been trained to the decorum of religious usages, and the true disciple of Christ in adjacent seats in the house of God, the spectator can see no difference. The one may be charmed by eloquence, and show, and music; the other by the truths of God's word. But apparently the ground is common: they are both there, in God's house, on his own day.

To us it has always appeared a sufficient objection to any species of amusement, that the voice of the evangelical community wars against it; and a sufficient warrant for its permission, that that voice allowed it. But things have reached a point in their march, where we are obliged to pause and consider. The churches, whether influenced by that portion of the world which has unfortunately crowded their communion tables; or by a desire to attract the whole irreligious community to the cross; have actually gone farther into the regions of gait and fashion, than many professed worldlings themselves go—while on the other hand, the world, influenced either by self-deception or by the popularity of fashionable piety, do most things that Christians do, and in some, actually excel them. Hence we have “confusion worse confounded:” from which there is no escape but by falling back upon the sacred principles of the New Testament. One fact which appears to us at least a probable fact, and which we therefore mention as worthy the consideration of others, is this: that all that vast amount of love of excitement, which formerly vented itself in alcohol and other excesses of riot, and which has been diverted by various laudable organizations for that object, is now concentrating itself in the countless, shining, expensive attractions of amusements.

We candidly acknowledge that the unwonted concern, with which our thoughts have of late dwelt upon matters of this class, has probably been greatly augmented by the *Lindiana* mania which has just whirled across our continent. And perhaps it may serve both to define our position, and to throw some light on the subject if we state a few particulars of our own experience in this case.

It would have afforded us great pleasure to listen to the enchanting voice of Jenny Lind. Among the incitements to such a gratification, read the following extract from a letter by a Christian lady, whose taste we greatly admire, and who heard her in Washington city: “She glided on and off the stage with indescribable gracefulness. As an instance of the melody of her voice, she pronounced the word ‘sweet,’ in a tone of sweetness, that no other mortal could equal. Amid the crash of the choruses of forty instruments, used by the most talented performers, I could, in every syllable, distinctly hear her voice above them all combined. As for the dazzling audience that they said was there, I did not see it. I

saw no one but Jenny Lind. I was ill enough to be in bed, but was obliged to be there: my very life seemed suspended upon her lips.”

But under no circumstances could we thus compromise our Christian profession. Where should we stop? That lady is identified with a class, and a profession, and a class of professions, utterly at war with the whole gospel. We can make no distinction between her concerts and other concerts; nor between concerts, and operas, and balls, and theatres, and circuses, and dances, and cards, and all the giddy whirl of mirth and folly that threatens to sweep away health, intelligence, domestic assiduity and attention, modesty, and all that simple, beautiful loveliness, that distinguished the ladies of a generation now nearly passed away.

We are fully aware of what is pleaded as exceptionable in this case. This lady is free from the faults which attach to a class—she is benevolent to the poor—she will appropriate largely of her receipts to support her parents and endow schools, &c. Precisely in so far as this argument is worth any thing, it is an apology for operas, circuses, theatres, and all the rest. All we have to do is to find a performer free from the usual faults, and the thing itself is lawful. To others there may be a distinction, but we can see no difference. But even if we could, we could not so far “cast pearls before swine,” as by our presence to countenance the sale of the sacred words of inspiration to a godless multitude as a matter of mere amusement for pay.

What is unlawful for a Christian minister, is unlawful for a Christian: inasmuch as there is but one code of morals in the New Testament. And we fully accord with the sentiment expressed by Dr. Fuller in one of his letters to the Editor of the *True Union*, when he says, that although under peculiar circumstances he “went,” “a concert is no place for a Christian.”

ED.

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THE DUTY OF INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN EFFORT FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS:

A Sermon, by REV. T. B. RIPLEY, Nashville, Tennessee.

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“He who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death.”—James v: 20.

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“*Salvation is of the Lord.*”

No truth, brethren, is more evident than this. But it is also evident, that in effecting the salvation of men, the Lord's plan is to employ the instrumentality of men. To that instrumentality, the Bible ascribes great importance. Hence it speaks of the Christian preacher *saving* them that hear him; (1 Tim. iv: 16;) of the pious wife *saving* her husband; of the pious husband *saving* his wife; (1 Cor. vii: 16;) and of him who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, *saving* a soul from death. Passages of this character are not unfrequent.

IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY CHRISTIAN TO ENDEAVOR TO PROMOTE THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

This is most certain. One proof only, we here adduce: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”—Matt. xxii: 39. This is the requirement of God's unchanging law, and it commands each one of us to love our neighbor's soul as our own. But if we thus love his soul, we shall labor and pray for its salvation, even as we are in earnest, engaged in working out our own salvation.

And who is our neighbor? OUR FELLOW-MAN. We are bound to love all men, near or remote, with a pure benevo-

lence; to do good to all, as we have opportunity. But of course our personal efforts to save men will be put forth in behalf principally, though not exclusively, of those around us; and especially of those with whom we are daily conversant in the paths of business; with whom we walk to the house of God; with whom we are united by the ties of friendship and consanguinity; with whom we are still more closely connected in the family circle.

This duty is binding on all Christians. No one, however illiterate, poor or obscure, is exempt from this obligation. Every one occupies a sphere of influence, though the sphere of some is larger far than that of others. Every one is connected with immortal beings, whose spiritual good he may promote. And such brethren, is the nature of religion, that he who possesses it, desires that others may possess it too. Among the first impulses springing up in the heart of the new convert, is that which prompts him to speak to those around him of the excellency and glory of Christ, and to invite them to come and partake of the joys himself has experienced. Thus what God's law enjoins, coincides with the earliest and warmest affections of the new creature.

This duty is indeed so obvious, that few, very few, who profess to believe in the Bible, have ventured to question it. Who would undertake to disprove it? From what page of the sacred book would he draw his argument? What doctrine there taught, what precept there enjoined, what example of good men there set forth, would justify indifference to the spiritual welfare of mankind, and the withholding of effort for their salvation?

No one duty is more evident; yet no one probably is more extensively neglected. Yet it is not entirely omitted by any good man, for such omission would indicate the entire absence of the Christian temper. But there may be great *neglect*, even when there is not a total *omission* of duty; and there actually is such neglect in regard to the requirement we are now considering. And why is this? The *CAUSES* are within us, and they involve, (as well as the effects they produce,) great criminality, and call for deep humiliation before God.

We can only glance at the *CAUSES*. There is *selfishness*, diametrically opposite both to the law of God, and to his gospel of love, which, so far as it is allowed by the Christian

to prevail within him, is counteractive of every benevolent purpose.

There is *slothfulness of spirit*, which resists with leaden weight, all active endeavors to save men.

There is in too many professors of religion, *an excessive devotion to the pursuit of gain*, which so engrosses the heart, and so occupies the time, that not an hour can be spared, nor an energy reserved, for this infinitely worthier object. To such individuals, gain is a present, tangible, real good, fully appreciated; yes, far too highly, while the soul, with its future state, in weal or wo, is overlooked, or dimly seen, like some object afar off, just vanishing in the distance.

In those whose energies are thus devoted to the pursuit of gain, and those who yield to base sloth and selfishness, there is an amazing *deficiency of faith*—of faith which brings the world to come near, and gives to things unseen, a present reality; and there is *scarcely a spark*, where there ought to be a *flame of pure benevolence*. And what endeavors will such persons make to save the souls of others? Let them fear lest they lose their own.

Again, there is in some of us *a fear of giving offence*, which shuts our mouth, when we perhaps, would earnestly persuade, or boldly expostulate with men; and sometimes we are silent through dread, which the consciousness of our own defects excites—of the keen retort, “physician, heal thyself!”

This brief statement of some of the *causes* of neglect, suggests the *remedy*. Let faith in “the true sayings of God,” become stronger, and thus bring the objects of the unseen world, more vividly present to the mind. Let love to God and love to men, become more intense, and expel the sinful love of the world, and selfish unconcern for perishing souls; then will pure and strong desire be felt for their salvation—desire which will prompt to appropriate efforts. Then too, will sluggishness be shaken off, the fear of man no longer close our lips in “guilty silence,” and every difficulty vanish from our path, or only arouse to greater exertion. Then, too, will God grant great success.

Having stated some of the causes of the neglect of effort to save souls, and suggested the appropriate remedy, we proceed TO PROPOSE SOME CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH IF

RIGHTLY APPRECIATED, WILL PROMPT TO EXERTION. We need (few indeed there are who do not need) to be aroused to greater activity, and urged to greater constancy in this "work of faith and labor of love." "Suffer" then "the word of exhortation." We would "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

Consider the magnitude of the object in view—THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL.

The soul. Who can estimate its worth? With what shall we compare it? With the world?—with ten thousand worlds?—with the material universe? All such comparisons fall short, infinitely short, of expressing it. No angelic mind can compute it. None knows but he who created it. Its worth is infinite, because with all its noble and vast capacities, it is destined to exist forever. And as in this life its powers expand, so it is reasonable to suppose, they will continue to expand forever in the life to come. Every man has within him this priceless treasure, and if unpardoned and unholy, he is certain to lose it. And O what a loss! No words can express it; no thought fully comprehend it. He who loses his soul, loses himself. He is not like the mariner, who safe on shore, sees the vessel sink from which he has just escaped; but like the merchant, shipwrecked with his treasures. Himself and his all go down into the deep. All is lost! It is the shipwreck of the soul. It is more. It is, as Jesus hath said, the destruction of both soul and body in hell.—Matt. x: 28.

But who can tell all that is implied in those awful words? May you, dear hearers, never know this by actual experience! But ah! you will know it, if you die without repentance, and you may die this very night.

And now contrast with this *perdition*, the *salvation* of the soul; its deliverance from sin, and from the second death; its admittance to heaven, and reigning with Christ forever. These are terms which involve more of blessedness and glory, than it has entered into the heart of man to conceive. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."—Matt. x: 28. All indeed, that is implied in the eternal salvation of the soul, no being fully knows except God. And may you, Christian brother, be instrumental of effecting such a result. Yes, "He who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death;" and the soul that is

saved from death, partakes of all the blessings of eternal life. You therefore, may effect an object, compared with which, the highest purposes of worldly ambition are an empty sound—a fleeting shadow. This is not the language of exaggeration, brethren, but of truth and soberness. And in doing this, in saving one soul, you do more. The good stops not *there*. That individual whom you have saved, will prove a blessing to others. He may be the instrument of saving many, and they again of still greater numbers, who in their day, may be successful in gaining multitudes more. Thus you may originate an influence, which shall be perpetually increasing, growing wider and wider, as time rolls on, and resulting ultimately in bringing millions into the kingdom of God.

Such results may follow the conversion of one soul. A far more abundant harvest may be gathered, if by your endeavors, many shall be brought to the Saviour. Yes, in yonder world, an innumerable multitude, may through a long series of instrumentalities, be able to trace back, even to your personal efforts, their conversion to God, their salvation from sin, and their everlasting happiness in heaven.

But there are additional considerations. When the sinner is converted from the error of his way, he is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.—Col. i: 13.

“Satan has a captive lost,
And Christ a subject born.”

And thus is the kingdom of God enlarged; that kingdom which is destined to increase, until it shall fill the whole world. For the Son of David, the Messiah, “shall have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth;” (Psalms lxxii: 8;) “and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”—Luke i: 33.

Moreover, in the conversion of sinful men to holiness, and in their full salvation, God is glorified. For the Divine perfections, the justice and mercy, the wisdom and power of Jehovah, are not only gloriously displayed in the great sacrifice offered by the Son of God for the sins of the world, but also in the actual redemption of every believer. And the whole company of the Lord's redeemed people will stand forth forever, as monuments of his

glorious grace, and by them will he be praised and glorified, ages without end. Amen!

How great then, brethren, is this work to which God calls us, and how weighty are the considerations which urge us to engage in it. Can we resist the appeal? Do we love our fellow-men, and desire their salvation? Do we love God, and desire that his kingdom may come, and his great name be glorified? Do we love Christ, and desire that he may "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied."

Let me further ask: Do we sympathize with our Saviour in his regard to the glory of God? It was not alone love to man which prompted him to undertake his great work—it was especially love to God. He came not only to redeem us, but to glorify God in our redemption. Hence, when the hour had come, and he viewed the scene just before him, as if already past, he spake to the Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—John xvii: 4. Anticipating his sufferings, or actually enduring them, the glory of God was with him the predominant consideration. It should be so with us. And certain it is, that the more we love God, and the stronger we desire his glory, the greater will be our love to men, and the more earnest and constant our endeavors to save them.

APPROPRIATE EFFORT MUST BE USED. On this topic, let a few hints suffice.

Some individuals need instruction, even in the first principles of the oracles of God. Men must know something of God, of his law, of their sins, of Christ and his great sacrifice, of heaven and hell, in order that they may be saved. How great then is the sin of neglecting, when we have opportunity, to impart such instruction to those who need it.

Again. To some persons we may sustain such relations, that propriety requires us to give merely a gentle intimation in respect to the claims of the Saviour, and of their own souls. Surely it would not be becoming for a religious youth to address an aged parent, or any man of gray hairs or official station, in a tone or manner which might be proper in addressing an equal, or a younger brother. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly."—1 Cor. xiii: 5.

Furthermore: The peculiar temperament of some men requires us to approach them with great caution, if we would

benefit their souls, while there are others, upon whom earnest persuasion, strong expostulation, even grave remonstrance, may effect most salutary impressions. There is a wise adaptation of effort to the peculiarities of men, which is perfectly consistent with "simplicity and godly sincerity." How differently did Paul address himself to different classes of men, yet with one object in view—their salvation. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law; to the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."—1 Cor. ix: 19–22. What a striking instance is this, of "the utmost simplicity of intention, combined with the utmost versatility of address."

Love to God and man, will prompt and guide to appropriate efforts, and it will, such is the nature of love, infuse into those efforts the spirit of humility, meekness and kindness, so essential to success. And with all this, will certainly be associated prayer, fervent and persevering, for the influence of the Spirit of God. Without this, what will our efforts avail? The end in view will not be attained. So when the prophet's staff was laid upon the face of the dead child, "there was neither voice nor hearing;" and the report carried back to Elisha was, "the child is not awaked." There must be earnest prayer to Him that quickeneth the dead, ere we can expect to see the dead in sin awakened to spiritual life.—2 Kings iv: 31–33.

Yes, brethren, all our endeavors must be accompanied with prayer, and the more earnestly we pray, the more energetic and constant will be our efforts. Nor shall we be easily discouraged. One effort will follow another. Various means will be put in requisition. The pen will occasionally be employed to convey the warm desires of the heart, and the epistle may prove successful, where the conversation failed. To promote our object, the aid of others, imbued with the spirit of benevolence, will be sought. If a direct address to the object of our solicitude be impracticable or in-

expedient, we shall communicate through the lips of a mutual friend, the message of entreaty and love. Those who have neglected the house of prayer, we shall persuade to attend, and to listen to the gospel. We shall also avail ourselves of the aid of the pungent tract, and the religious volume, fraught with instruction and persuasion. Thanks be to God for these glorious facilities, now so abundantly furnished, for benefiting the souls of men.

But while we highly prize these helps, we would regard as immeasurably high above them all, like the sun among the inferior lights, the Book of God, perfect, infallible—our sure guide to heaven. Other books are useful to the souls of men, just so far as they accord with this, and are imbued with its spirit. Let then every family have the Bible; and more than this, let each member of the family who can read, have an entire copy. Such an arrangement would be attended with most delightful results. Why should not all the community, like Timothy, know from childhood the holy scriptures? In such a state of things, there would occur multiplied confirmations of the truth, that those inspired writings are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.—2 Tim. iii: 15.

Such, brethren, is a brief and imperfect sketch of the means which we are to employ, to promote the salvation of our fellow-men. Some of these means, even the most illiterate and obscure disciple can employ, while others are more adapted to individuals whose minds have been disciplined by study, and replenished with knowledge. Still after all, the most important qualification for this great duty is a heart overflowing with love to God and love to man. This, this will accomplish infinitely more for the saving of souls, than the most splendid talents and extensive learning, and commanding influence, without it.

I must not close these remarks, without adverting to the vast importance of a holy example. Our life, brethren, must preach. Let it enforce with a sacred eloquence all our endeavors in behalf of the immortal beings around us. Let us exhibit in the family circle, gentleness, kindness and holiness, in word and deed—in the daily avocations of life, diligence, uprightness, truthfulness, and a sacred regard to the golden rule—in the community, peace, integrity, benevolence, deep interest in the public weal, reverence for

law and lawful authority, and a conscientious discharge of every duty we owe to our country—in the church, punctuality and constancy of attendance at meetings, a reverent and hearty engagedness in the worship of the Most High, deep interest in the word preached, a holy joyfulness, an affectionate deportment towards our Christian brethren, and an entire self-consecration to the Redeemer, evinced by a cheerful giving of our time, property, personal services, to promote his kingdom. Thus shall our Christian example gain our kindred, our friends, our fellow-men around to the Saviour, and secure their everlasting gain—the salvation of their souls.

Yes, brethren, these manifestations of the Christian temper and life, these prayers, these instructions and persuasions, these various endeavors, these labors of love in behalf of souls, will not be in vain. They have been in numberless instances, signally successful. To each laborer in this field, the command of God is: “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether both shall be alike good.”—Ecclesiastes ii: 6. What encouragement to labor is here!

Christian brethren, how unspeakably important is the position we occupy in the universe of God, where we may exert an agency, which shall be followed by results so vast and glorious; where the efforts of an hour shall accomplish a good lasting as eternity. What a high responsibility rests upon us! What a career of usefulness is opened before us! It is not so much a *duty* to which we are summoned, as a *sublime privilege* in which we are invited to share. Let us with eagerness accept of it, as men grasp a prize; and whatsoever our hand findeth to do in this good work, let us do it with our might. Soon this privilege, a boon not conferred even on Gabriel, for we read not of angels saving men, will be withdrawn. Death will overtake us. Then must cease all our personal efforts to save men. In the state of blessed souls, this privilege cannot be enjoyed, and if regret be possible there, this surely will awaken it, that while on earth, our efforts for the salvation of men, were not more constant, more earnest, more deeply serious and affectionate, and accompanied with a greater measure of that importunity in prayer, which prevails with God.

Disciple of Jesus, (we would address each individual professor,) follower of him who loved thee, and gave himself for thee—What have been thy desires, thy prayers, and thy efforts for the salvation of men? Does conscience accuse thee of great deficiency and neglect? Ah! thou canst not recall the past. Time gone cannot be redeemed. Opportunities most precious, and specially favorable for doing good to the souls of men, have passed by never to return. Some, whom thou oughtest to have instructed or warned, are gone. If they died without repentance, they have perished. And what, if the all-seeing Judge view thee as accessory to their destruction? What, if their blood be upon thee? O repent of past omissions, and approach the compassionate Saviour, whose blood can cleanse thee from even this blood-guiltiness. Then will the joy of God's salvation be restored to thee, and thou wilt appreciate more fully the soul's amazing worth, and be prepared to teach transgressors the ways of God. He will, in answer to thy intercessions, add his blessing to thy efforts, and sinners will be converted unto God, and saved with an everlasting salvation.—Psalms li: 12-14.

In conclusion, permit us to remark, that while it is the obvious and imperative duty of all Christians to labor for the salvation of souls, there rest upon the Christian parent, the Sabbath school teacher, and the minister of the gospel, additional and peculiar obligations.

Christian fathers! Christian mothers!—Is it needful to urge you to effort in behalf of your children's souls? How is it possible for you to forbear effort? Could you neglect your child's education, and allow him to grow up in ignorance? Could you, if he were sick, let him die for want of attention? Could you suffer him to starve in the midst of your abundance? But an evil far surpassing these, do you inflict upon him, if you neglect his spiritual interests, if you forbear to "bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Ephesians vi: 4. O incur not this awful guilt. Bring not upon yourselves and your children, the tremendous suffering consequent upon such neglect. Say you God's mercy will meet and convert and save my children, notwithstanding my negligence. It may—it is possible. But will his mercies justify your delinquencies? And can you rest at ease, while the dreadful probability is, that your

children will be lost? Yes, we must declare it, you have great reason to fear that your criminal omission of parental duty will be followed by the perdition of your offspring, and by your own perdition. For if you live neglectful of your children's souls, you have reason to fear that you are yourselves unconverted; for how is it possible for a man who has tasted the bitterness of sin, and felt the pangs of guilt, and a coming judgment, and trusting in Jesus, has found relief from guilt, and experienced the joy of pardon, and the peace of God, and the love of Jesus; and who has been made a partaker of the Spirit of Jesus—how is it possible, we ask, for such an one to be indifferent to the spiritual interests of any fellow-being, and especially of his own offspring?

We entreat you, beloved friends, by the intimate and tender relation you sustain to your children, by the love you bear them, by the value of their souls, and the importance of their salvation, to train them up as God directs; to teach them his truth; to live before them so conformably to the gospel of Christ, that they may see in you daily exemplified, its holy doctrines, and precepts and spirit. We beseech you to guard them from the contagion of evil companions, and from the pestiferous influence of bad books; and, surrounded as they are with so many spiritual dangers, let your counsels be coupled with unceasing prayer for them and with them. May God help you parents, to be faithful to your sacred trust, and may you and your offspring meet, and dwell forever in the kingdom of glory.

Sabbath school teachers, keep ever before you this great object—the salvation of the youth and children whom you instruct. Constantly meet them on the return of the Lord's day; faithfully teach them the truths contained in the Bible; affectionately address them, and urge upon their attention the kind and gracious invitations of the Redeemer; importunately pray for them, that the Divine blessing may render your efforts successful. Perseveringly pursue this course. God will approve your work. Yours may be the joy of seeing all your pupils, disciples indeed of the Heavenly Teacher, loving and obeying his instructions, his followers here, and inheritors at length of the kingdom of everlasting light.

Brethren, preachers of the gospel, called and appointed of God to proclaim salvation to perishing men. How great is our work!—how glorious our privilege!—how vast our re-

sponsibility! "Where much is given, much will be required."—Luke xii: 48. Let us watch for souls as they that must give account. Let us feed the flock of God, "with knowledge and understanding," "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."—Col. i: 28. The impenitent let us persuade with strong desire, and fervent tenderness, to accept Jehovah's gracious overtures of pardon and peace. Let us so labor, and pray, and watch, and live, that at the great day, we may be found "pure from the blood of all men."—Acts xx: 26. Let our work be our business and our pleasure; and its saving results, with the approbation of the Chief Shepherd, our reward.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."—Daniel xii: 3. Amen!

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST:

A Sermon, preached at Wake Forest College, by REV. A. McDOWELL, of Milton, North Carolina.

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"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Gal. vi: 7.

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The inspired writers availed themselves of the objects and operations of nature, with which their hearers were familiar, to illustrate principles in morals more difficult to be understood.

The text intimates, that as there are in nature a seed-time and a harvest, so also there is something analagous to these in morals. And as in nature every species of vegetable produces seed after its own kind, so also in morals, every action that possesses a moral quality, produces its own fruit, or is followed by its own appropriate results. If a man sows wheat, he may reasonably expect to reap wheat; and so if he pursues a course of virtuous action, he may expect to reap the reward which God has connected with virtue.

But if, on the other hand, he sows tares, he must expect to reap tares; and in like manner, if he pursues a course of vice, he may expect with equal certainty, that the consequences of such conduct will, sooner or later, be visited upon his own head.

The judicious farmer is careful to prepare his land well, to procure the best seed, and to deposit it in the earth in the time of spring, knowing that if he lets *that* season pass unimproved, it will not return, and that he will have to "beg in harvest and have nothing." If, then, there be a seed-time in morals, as well as in nature, and if that time mispent can never be redeemed, it is important to inquire, when that time is, and how long it will continue? In attempting to answer the first of these inquiries, we may state that, in general, the present life is the seed-time of our existence. We sow here, we shall reap hereafter. Every action of our lives, from the cradle to the grave, will make an indelible impression upon our characters; the results of which will be developed in the eternal world. The present is a probationary state. We are placed here for a few short fleeting years, to form characters for eternity. We are surrounded by temptations: impelled on the one hand by our own carnal appetites and passions to wicked indulgence, and on the other by the inducements of reason and the admonitions of conscience to the practice of virtue. Now, which of these shall we obey? If we obey the former, we become viler and yet more vile as days and years increase, and form characters which will in every way fit us to become associates and companions of devils and condemned spirits; and when we are at length doomed to an everlasting companionship with such beings as these, we shall have but reaped the appropriate reward for having sown to the flesh. But if, on the contrary, we obey the nobler impulses of our nature—reason and conscience—we shall go on from virtue to virtue with increased facility, every step in our progress becoming less difficult than the last, until we shall have formed characters which will fit us to become intimate associates of angels and glorified spirits; and when our probation ceases, we shall reap as the reward of our virtue happiness infinite in degree and endless in duration, entirely beyond the reach of temptation or trial. //

These ultimate results of action ought to be sufficient to

induce reasonable beings to choose a virtuous in preference to a vicious life. Men act reasonably in regard to all other things. For instance: the man who is ambitious to accumulate wealth, cheerfully denies himself not only the luxuries, but even the comforts of life, in order to gratify his ruling passion. The man who wishes to enjoy vigorous health, refrains from those delicacies which, though most grateful to his palate, are destructive to his health. And so in every other instance, where it is foreseen that present self-denial will produce, in the end, a greater amount of happiness. But the rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice are not limited wholly to a future life. Even during our present existence, we glean many of the first fruits, which are to us foretastes and pledges of our future harvest. Notwithstanding the righteous are not exempted from the sufferings, pains, privations and toils, which are the common lot of fallen man; nay, though the most devout Christians are frequently called to pass through trials of a peculiar nature, yet they have consolations and supports of which others are wholly ignorant. It is in the very nature of virtue to carry with it its own support. The virtuous man clad in the tripple armor of an approving conscience, can face all dangers, endure all sufferings, and overcome all difficulties, without murmuring or complaint. Often has the Christian martyr been enabled to rejoice in the midst of the blazing faggot, or when surrounded by ravenous beasts of prey, ready at a given signal to rush upon him and tear his limbs asunder. Often the pious Christian, when prostrated by disease and racked by pain, is enabled to smile through his sufferings, and not unfrequently to break forth into songs of genuine rejoicing. And why can he thus rejoice? It is because, notwithstanding the raging of the elements without, he has peace within. He knows that he has sown good seed, and that good seed can never produce other than good fruit. He is conscious that the hand that applies the chastening rod is the hand of a Friend, yea, of a Father, who does not afflict willingly, but who will make these light afflictions work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. By this confidence, he is enabled to look above and beyond the present state of pain and toil, and by the eye of faith, to descry a golden harvest waved by celestial breezes, ripening for him in the heavenly

Canaan. No wonder, then, that he should forget his pains, and in the midst of his sufferings, break forth into songs of rejoicing, as he catches a glimpse of the glorious reward that awaits him.

The wicked, on the other hand, instead of possessing that boldness that characterizes the righteous, is the subject of constant alarms and of fearful forebodings; he is made to start at his own shadow, and to flee from a man unarmed. Frequently he writhes in agony, and quakes with fear lest his crimes should be detected. Often under the tortures of a guilty conscience, when he walks forth by day or by night, he imagines that the heavens are commissioned to blast him, or the earth to open her mouth and swallow him up. And when he is brought down upon a bed of suffering, he has none of the consolations and supports that are enjoyed by the righteous. When he looks back on his past history, a dark catalogue of crimes and folly meets his affrighted vision. And when he looks into the future, grim horror and pale despair are depicted in his countenance. He feels that he deserves punishment, and he is conscious that when this flesh, to which he has been all his life-time sowing, shall return to its original elements and mingle with its mother dust, he, a disembodied spirit, must take up his abode in the dark prison-house of despair, and there reap the eternal reward of his own doings. It would not then be surprising if even he should, for a time, forget the sufferings of his body in view of that fearful harvest of woe and misery, which awaits him in the eternal world.

If it were a settled point, that there is no existence beyond the present—that this jewel shall perish with the casket that contains it, it seems that these slight distinctions, which are made between the righteous and the wicked in the present life, ought to make virtue desirable and vice detestable. Where is the boy of a dozen years old, who has not repeatedly experienced the happiness which arises from doing right, and the shame and degradation consequent on doing wrong? Call to mind the past time, when questioned by your mother in regard to some impropriety, which, perhaps, if acknowledged, would have received from her a mild rebuke, you rather than confess your fault, dared to tell her a falsehood. How degraded did you feel in the presence of that mother, whom you had deceived! How did you wish

to escape from her presence that you might, if possible, escape also from your degradation and shame! But how different were your feelings when, perhaps, on another occasion, you had the manliness to tell her the truth, to acknowledge your fault, and to ask forgiveness! You then felt a sense of self-commendation, and had an approving conscience, the value of which is above price.

Such are the never varying effects of virtue and vice upon one's own feelings, and these are but earnestness of more important results, which are to come hereafter.

We have before said, that in general the present life is the seed-time of our existence. We may state further, that youth is especially the seed-time of life. This is true for several reasons. First: the heart is then more susceptible of virtuous impressions than at any other period, and the impressions made are more apt to be permanent.

Again, principles then formed, having a longer time to develop and less opposition to encounter, arrive at greater maturity.

Principles formed at any subsequent period, are like seed sown after the proper season, which are either scorched by the suns of summer, or blasted by the frosts of autumn, and never reach maturity.

If, then, life, the whole of life, be important as the seed-time of eternity, much more is youth important as the seed-time of both time and eternity! We have the best reasons for believing that character is developed very early in life, and that the type it then assumes will, as a general rule, cast an impression on it in time and throughout eternity; for character cannot be essentially different in eternity, from what it is in time. You, my young friends, now occupy this most important position; before you is the world with all its allurements, its follies and its temptations; around you cluster the fondest hopes and the brightest expectations of others; and it is for you to cause these hopes and expectations to be realized, or to blast them forever. Your destiny, both present and future, will depend very much on your own conduct. You have the means of accomplishing whatever you desire. If you are fired with the love of knowledge and it is your ambition to become distinguished for learning, you may, if your life be spared and you have physical strength to bear the application, wade through the literature of both

the present and past ages. You may make yourself master of many languages, both ancient and modern; you may become familiar with the entire circle of science, so that you may be able to count the stars of heaven and tell them by name; to weigh them as it were in balances, and estimate their magnitude and distances; to follow the comet in its rapid flight, and to calculate its period and its orbit; and after all, if you neglect to form characters of virtue and piety, you will die as the fool dieth, and lament your folly throughout eternity.

If it is your wish to become eminent as a warrior, you may, by proper exertions, obtain the object of your desire; you may be the means of overturning empires and of building up kingdoms; you may even ascend to a throne over the bodies of your slaughtered fellow-beings; and at last, you may die as the greatest warrior of modern times died—a miserable exile—and all virtuous men throughout all coming time will execrate your memory.

And if you prefer the more enviable distinction of being a benefactor to your race and of becoming eminent as a man of virtue and a saint, in this also you may obtain the object of your desire. In order to do this, employ the golden period of youth in sowing the seeds of piety and virtue, form your character in accordance with the principles laid down in God's word, forget not daily to supplicate that Being "who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," for wisdom to direct and grace to sustain you. Thus you may become eminent as you desire, and may form a character which will make you a blessing to the world, and inscribe your name, not on the marble column commemorative of a hundred victories or a dozen triumphs; nor yet on the lofty dome of fame's proud temple; but which is far better, in the Lamb's book of life. How unspeakably important is it, then, that the precious season of youth should be wisely improved—that the seed of divine truth should be implanted in the heart, before the noxious weeds of passion, of corrupt principles and vicious habits, have pre-occupied the soil!—But even if every period of life were equally auspicious, it would be supreme folly to waste on trifles, the present opportunity, and to trust the adjustment of our most important interest to a period which, in our history, may never arrive. Human life is of all things the most uncertain. It is in

scripture compared to the fleeting shadow, the early dew, the morning cloud, the fragile flower; things which of all others, are the most evanescent and transitory in their nature.

If man had retained the holiness and innocence with which he was originally created, we believe that he would have been forever a stranger to suffering and death, and would have flourished in immortal youth and vigor amidst the lovely bowers and congenial elements of that terrestrial paradise, in the midst of which grew the tree of life, and whose balmy breezes and limpid waters contained nothing noxious or impure.

But alas for us, his descendants! he did not retain his innocence: he violated the law of his Maker; the decree went forth, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—The earth was cursed for his sake. Instead of the fir tree and the myrtle came up the thorns and the thistles; and all nature was commissioned to plague and afflict him, until he shall return to the earth from whence he was taken. And now, the very food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe, are all charged with deadly particles. Every lake and river, pond and valley, sends up its noxious vapors and poisons our atmosphere; contagion is borne upon the wings of the wind, and death in a thousand forms stands thick around to cut us down as soon as we begin to live, so that few indeed of all the myriads that enter upon life ever reach the appointed limit of three score years and ten. Cast your thoughts about you, and call to mind how many even within the circle of your own acquaintance, who began life with you, are now slumbering beneath the cold clods of the valley, and whose spirits have gone to reap the rewards of their doings; and draw thence solemn admonitions to husband the fleeting moments as they pass—to improve the golden *now*, which is all you can claim, in sowing to the spirit that you may of the spirit reap life everlasting.

Recollect, too, that "he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." If you would reap a bountiful harvest of happiness hereafter, you must spend, not a month, or a year, or twenty years in sowing to the spirit, but you must spend your life, be it long or short, in active, energetic, Christian effort. You may not expect, if you live a cold,

formal and inactive life, to reap the reward of an active, zealous and warm hearted Christian. Nor can you hope, if you devote only the evening of your days to religion, to reap the reward due to him, who has spent the ardor of his youth and the vigor of his manhood, as well as the feebleness of his age, in the service of his Maker. As well might the indolent farmer, who neither sows in spring nor ploughs in summer, expect to reap as bountifully as his active, energetic and enterprising neighbor.

Never were more solemn responsibilities imposed upon any generation of men to sow to the spirit, than upon the present; and never were so great facilities afforded for so doing as exist at the present time. From the North and the South, from the East and the West, comes up the importunate cry for spiritual aid—for the bread of life. O how fearful will be the account of him, who having it in his power to aid, turns a deaf ear to these cries! What a harvest of woe and misery may that individual expect to reap, who having wealth, or talents, or influence, shall fail to consecrate them to the service of Him, who bestowed these precious gifts upon him, and who by these very cries that are coming up from the four quarters of the earth, is demanding that these gifts be employed for his glory!

Life, even the longest life, forms but a point, a hair's breadth, in that endless circle of duration through which we, immortal beings, are destined to pass. It cannot, therefore, be too long a time to devote to the formation of characters for eternity. Many act as though religion were a matter of small moment. They seem to imagine that they can throw a loose rein on the neck of passion—that they can walk in the sight of their own eyes and after the imaginations of their own hearts, for twenty, thirty and forty years; and when the vanities of earth can no longer afford them pleasure, by a partial reformation and a forced performance of duties which are in themselves hateful, they can obtain at last the rewards of a religious life. O, how fatal are such delusions, when the scriptures declare that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap! that for every idle word and foolish thought, we shall be brought into judgment; that for every abused privilege and misspent hour, we must give an account in the day of judgment. Would you presume, O vain man, by your impotent arm to reverse the laws of na-

ture? Can you command the sun to stand still in the heavens, and cause him to obey you? Can you arrest the mountain torrent, as it dashes in headlong fury down its precipitous channel, and cause it to flow back to its source? Can you leap from the precipice and escape the accelerating force of gravity? Or can you take coals of fire in your bosom and not be burned? "Be not deceived then, for God will not be mocked." If you cannot suspend the smallest law of nature, flatter not yourself that you will be more successful in suspending the laws of morals, which have been established by the same immutable Being. You may, if you choose, set at naught all pious admonitions; you may abuse all your exalted privileges and trample them as it were beneath your feet; you may give loose rein to your appetites and passions, and follow only the dictates of your own wicked hearts; but if you do, be assured that there will spring up for you, in the eternal world, a harvest of woe. It is important also to remember, that the harvest is always more abundant than the seed sown.

Ten thousand years spent in the world of woe, will not expiate the crimes of one day here. And on the other hand, ten thousand years, nay, ten thousand times ten thousand years, spent amidst the ravishing glories of the New Jerusalem, may not reward you for the sufferings of one day here endured for the sake of Christ and his gospel.

"Be not, then, weary in well doing," but be assured that for all the sufferings you endure, and for all the sacrifices you make in the cause of religion, there is a reward, and that in due time you shall reap if you faint not. Amen.

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THE CERTAINTY OF DIVINE PURPOSES AND THE CONTINGENCY OF SECOND CAUSES:

A Sermon, by REV. THOMAS F. CURTIS, Professor of Theology and Moral Science, in Howard College, Alabama.

"I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color, as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."—Acts xxvii: 22-31.

Surely my brethren, this narrative must convince every one that nothing can prevent the fulfillment of the promises of the Almighty—the accomplishment of his purposes. Those most powerful elements of nature, the winds and the waves, combine their force against this frail bark, freighted with an apostle of the Lamb. Most of the storms of the Mediterranean though violent are short; but this is both fierce and long. For fourteen days neither sun nor stars have appeared; all hope of deliverance has long been taken away, when suddenly, and in the darkness of midnight, the voyagers find themselves exposed to even more peril now from the land than heretofore from the sea. Those upon whom alone they can rely for help, augment their danger at this fearful crisis. Having recklessly loosed from Crete at a dangerous season, the sailors would now like cowards desert the ship, and leave the hundreds of lives committed to their care to perish as they may. What the selfishness of

the sailors fails to effect, the brutal violence of the soldiers nearly accomplishes. Death seems impatient of his prey, and raises up against St. Paul new enemies even among those momentarily expecting a watery grave themselves; and it is the soldiers' counsel to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim out and escape. Meantime the ship has fallen into a place where two seas or currents meet, and run aground, so that the hinder part of it is already broken by the violence of the waves. The boat has been cut adrift, and many are unable to swim.

But one individual there is on board, who has all along maintained a wonderful serenity. It is St. Paul, who has been commissioned of heaven to assure this great company, that "not a hair shall fall from the head of any of them." Accordingly, in spite of all dangers, and though their number is so great, two hundred three score and sixteen souls, yet some by swimming, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, all escape safe to land.

How certain then is it that nothing can prevent the fulfillment of God's promises—the accomplishment of his purposes. Amidst all combinations of peril and difficulty; in spite of the foolish, and cowardly and brutal counsels of men, the plans of the Almighty remain undisturbed, and none that he has appointed to live can die. Of all this multitude, not one is drowned; not one in any way loses his life, because an angel has been commissioned to declare to St. Paul, "lo God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Yet this is accomplished, not by compulsion, not by restraint, but by the unfettered choice and energy of each; and through the regular operations of the laws of nature.

The great doctrine of this text then—one to which we would invite your closest attention—is, that the complete freedom of human agency; the usual and regular operation of the laws of nature—in fine, the entire contingency of all second causes, is quite consistent with the certain accomplishment of the Divine purposes. In other words, *the certainty of the Divine purposes, in no way interferes with the contingency of second causes*. In this case, for instance, it did not interfere with the natural effect of the winds and of the waves, the anchors and the sails, the rugged rocks of nature, and the strenuous exertions of man. The first Baptist Confession of Faith issued in 1643, well expresses this

doctrine. "God has decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor hath any fellowship therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

The Divine purpose in this case was, that all of these two hundred and seventy-six persons should escape safely to land. This was certain and absolutely promised of God; promised not to them, but to St. Paul. Not conditionally, therefore, upon their conduct; nor even upon that of the apostle. It was a promise repeated three times, without any restriction. Even the details of the event were all distinctly declared, down to "the loss of the ship," and the landing of the company upon "a certain island." All of these were therefore, perfectly determined; so much so, that the apostle Paul never for a moment seems to doubt the certainty of their escape. And as if their deliverance were not only sure, but already accomplished, in the thickest of the peril, he takes bread and gives thanks to God in the presence of them all, staking his own character as a prophet of the Most High; or rather, the truth of God himself, upon the fact, that all of them should be saved from that threatened destruction. Had but one in any way been lost, the promise of Him who cannot lie, would have been forfeited; his prediction falsified.

And yet while so perfectly certain of the final result, the apostle seems to feel that every second cause will work naturally, and that every human effort must be made, just as if there were no decree about the matter at all. While he counsels to a cheerful confidence in God as to the final result, this is not to permit them to relax a single effort for safety. The sounding line must be cast twice. Four anchors are to be lowered. At daylight the sails must be set, and the rudder bands loosed, and each recruit himself by a hearty meal for the final and desperate struggle. Those who can swim, must swim for precious life, and each of the rest must betake himself to a board, or to a spar. Not only instinctive vigorous effort, but sailor-like skill is necessary. All that human wisdom can suggest, is to be done. The two hundred soldiers will not suffice for this occasion. The direction and

skill of the shipmen are requisite; and when these would have escaped, the boat is to be cut adrift, rather than their experience be lost to those on board. And what is more, St. Paul declares the safety of the rest, entirely contingent upon the stay of those men.—“Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” You perceive then, that he had no notion of the certainty of the Divine purposes superseding the necessity of human effort. In his opinion, the absolute decree did not in the least interfere with the contingency of second causes, for he asserts expressly, that without the use of all the proper means, the result would be quite different—exactly opposite of what it actually was, and was to be. “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”

We may regard this as an illustration of a principle, that operates throughout the whole of the divine government, that *the immutable purposes of God in no way interfere with the natural operation of second causes*; nor does certainty in the sight of God, take away their natural contingency from the actions of man.

We will further illustrate this:

I. *From prophecy.* If ever there were times when the ancient prophets were more explicit than at all others, it was “when they spake of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should follow.” So immutably fixed in the Divine purposes, was the death of the Son of God, that Christ is called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* Not only was the event itself predicted, but every particular relating to it, accurately foretold. He was to be betrayed by “his own familiar friend in whom he trusted,” Judas. The Jews and the gentiles, the kings and the rulers, were to “take counsel against him;” that is, the chief priests, Herod and Pilate, (this last a gentile ruler,) were to conspire to put him to death. And it was “without a cause” that he was to be “hated” and delivered to die. This and much more had been prophesied a thousand years before the great event took place. It is therefore said, that “he must needs have suffered,” (Acts xvii: 3,) and was “delivered

* I am aware that it is a matter of dispute, if this is the true sense of Rev. xiii: 6, and would not insist on it strenuously.

by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" (Acts ii: 23;) so that whatsoever Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel gathered together to do, was only what "the hand and the counsel of God had determined before should be done."—Acts iv: 24.

But did this Divine prophecy and purpose—did the certainty of the death of Christ impair in the least the free agency of those who put him to death, or diminish their guilt, think you? Did it not rather increase it, seeing that their crime had been so palpably foretold. "Him being delivered, saith St. Peter, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, *and by wicked hands* have crucified and slain." They were clearly as guilty of murder, and needed repentance quite as much, as if this event had never been predicted. But their "hands" could not have been "wicked," if they had not been *free*. They could not have been free agents if they had not acted as they did from choice. They did not make a free choice had they not had the natural powers necessary to choose otherwise. If they could have chosen otherwise, then was there a perfect contingency of the events upon their wills, so far as they were concerned; and then also certainty on the part of God co-existed with perfect freedom and contingency on the part of man.

And if so, in the case of this prophecy, equally so in that of every other, and wherever any event is foretold in Scripture, we may set it down as perfectly certain, that though the prophecy will be fulfilled, yet is the contingency of causes in no way destroyed, and human freedom of choice remains perfectly unimpaired.

Some of these prophecies embrace hundreds of years, and thousands of persons and events. The outlines of the whole history of the church of Christ to the end of time, is foretold in the single book of Revelation; and yet the perfect certainty of these events in the eye of God, does not at all impair the freedom of the human agency which accomplishes them.

But further: The prophecies are but the utterance of a few—a very few of those things, which are perfectly certain with God. The most skeptical must admit, that there are many more events equally certain and fixed in His mind, though not revealed to men. But their certainty in His

sight, does not destroy the free agency of those who fulfill them in these secret, any more than in the revealed cases.

II. Nearly allied to the prophecies, are the *promises of God*.

They are even more plainly manifestations of his purposes. We proceed to shew, that neither do they destroy the contingency of second causes. Take for example, one promise of greatest comfort and support to the truly pious, namely, that of the bestowment of preserving grace. Of his sheep Jesus says: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." The original is even stronger than the English. There it is not "neither can any *man*," but "neither can *any*, that is, any man or devil, pluck them out of my hand." My Father is greater than all, and *none*, nothing, no one, no evil spirit, is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. If one true child of grace were finally lost, this promise of God would be violated.

And yet both the apostle and the Saviour, unhesitatingly assure us, as equally certain, that unless we persevere in holiness unto the end of life, we shall as surely be lost, as if never converted:—That "if any man draw back, it is unto perdition:"—That he, and he only "who endureth to the end, shall be saved." In all the promises of God, there is no such thing as elected laziness—predestinated slothfulness. There is no promise of impunity to wickedness any where, least of all in the house of God, where judgment shall begin. But yet it may be urged, the promise is, that not one of these shall be lost. Most true, and yet not less true is it, that they are as much free agents as ever, and if they indulge in sin, are in just as great danger of perishing as any others. So that we may say to every professor of religion who seems about to stray from the ark of safety, with all the impassioned earnestness and sincerity of St. Paul in the text, except ye abide in the ship—the ark of gospel truth—ye cannot be saved.

III. To shew by yet another illustration, that certainty on the part of God does not interfere with the contingency of second causes, or on the part of man, we appeal further to *the doctrine of personal election*.

It is plainly asserted in scripture, that the people of God have been chosen to their high privilege from all eternity—

“chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world:” “Predestinated unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will:”—Chosen not on account of good works, or foreseen holiness, but “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Well, therefore, may Jesus say to his people, one and all, “ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” And yet the salvation of all these, though perfectly certain with Him, is ever represented in the scripture as just as contingent and conditional on their repentance and faith, as if there were no purpose at all. The Saviour declares to every man elect or not elect, “Except ye repent, ye shall perish.” “Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” And this you perceive, is all just as contingent on the one hand, and yet just as certain on the other, and yet no more contradictory, than when St. Paul said, “except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”

We see this principle then running throughout all scripture—through all the government of God. We have not discussed the metaphysics of this question, but sought merely to establish and illustrate the fact. He who is still rash enough to maintain, that the certainty of a thing in the sight of God, is inconsistent with the contingency of second causes, or freedom on the part of man, cannot blame *us*. He must conceive himself a better logician than St. Paul. His dispute is not with this or that denomination of Christians, but with Christianity itself—nay more, as we will shew, with the most essential attributes of a Supreme Being, if not with His existence. //

But it still has been objected, and doubtless will be again and again, that a Divine decree by rendering an event certain before it takes place, must destroy all contingency in regard to it. This I deny. That an event cannot be contingent *in the same sense* that it is certain, or in regard to the same being, is most true. But an event may be perfectly certain with God, and yet contingent in regard to man:*

* Chance, as Dr. Campbell justly remarks, (Philosophy of Rhetoric, Book I, chap. 5, sec. 2, Part 3, § 4,) “does not imply the absence of a cause, but only *our ignorance* of the cause.” So when we speak of an

Certain in the sight of the first great cause, and yet contingent to us upon the operation of all the second causes by which it is brought about.

To set this in as clear a light as possible, let us suppose the Divine Being to create a man on purpose to make him perfectly a free agent in the sight of the objector, and all his actions contingent on his own will. There shall be no purpose whatever in regard to him. He shall be free to do, or not to do, without interference; to plant his fields and reap the reward of industry, or to be idle and suffer want; to be holy, and thus saved, or to be wicked, and finally lost. Let us even suppose the Divine Being not to know before hand, any of the decisions to which his mind will come. Such a being, every one, even the stoutest objector, will admit to be perfectly free—his actions all contingent. But now let us alter the supposition, and although God shall have formed no purpose or decree whatever in regard to this man, let us conceive that in the inscrutable recesses of his own mind, he suddenly and with perfect certainty, foresees all that he will do. If he now certainly knows what that man will do, what he will do must be perfectly certain in his sight, for otherwise, he could not certainly know it. But still, the mere fact of God's knowing what he will do, if he interfere or not, to alter any event, cannot make that individual less a free agent, or his actions less really contingent upon his own choice, than if those actions and purposes had remained unknown. If they were contingent before, they are contingent now, though foreknown to God, and therefore, perfectly certain with him. The certainty of an event then in the sight of God, does not destroy its contingency so far as man is concerned. In order to escape this conclusion, the objector must plunge into the absurdities of fatalism on the one hand, or Atheism on the other. Common Deism would afford no refuge.

But this is not a merely suppositious case. The Divine Being perfectly knows every event that will take place, even

event as *contingent*, we do not mean to express any doubt that it will really happen, according to the laws of cause and effect, but simply that *we are ignorant* how those laws will operate in that case. No future event, therefore, can be otherwise than contingent with man, except as he knows what will be the operation of all the laws bearing upon it, while no event can be contingent with God.

every decision the mind of man will make, otherwise, he were not omniscient. He knows, to illustrate our statement most clearly, how many bales of merchandize the merchant will dispose of, and how many bags of cotton and bushels of corn, each planter will make. It is with him, therefore, perfectly certain. And yet each merchant knows that his goods will never come, unless he orders them, or be sold, unless he sells them. And each planter knows that his success is contingent on his efforts; nor does he expect to reap a harvest where he sows no seed. And as in temporal things, so also is it in things spiritual. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The certainty with God does not interfere with human freedom in the one case, more than in the other. The planter who on account of the certainty of, the matter with God, should neglect to plant or to tend his crop, would not be more sure to lose his harvest, than he who neglects to pray on account of the certainty of the Divine purposes, will be certain to lose his soul. But if it would be absurd for the diligent planter to fear that his prospect for success was no greater after all his toil than the idler's, equally foolish is it to suppose, that the certainty of the Divine purposes renders our efforts to obtain salvation unavailing and useless. Oh no, brethren, God's certain foreknowledge and decrees, interfere not with the contingency of second causes; but leave them as unfettered and free, as if there were no purposes—no certainty at all. They even establish the laws of cause and effect, so that the one shall legitimately and with certainty produce the other.

We remark, therefore, by way of *improvement*:—

1. That *the certainty of the Divine purposes forms no ground of carelessness for any man in the affairs of his soul.*

Let us conceive our own spiritual concerns my brethren, to be represented by the circumstances of the apostle, and his tempest-tossed companions, hurried to and fro as we are in the storms of life, and in momentary danger of perishing, without the assistance of Almighty grace. It may be, and I trust it is recorded of many of us, that through the intercession of the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profes-

sion, our souls being given to Him in covenant of redemption, shall be saved finally from the angry billows of the wrath of God. But would the most absolute and personal knowledge of this purpose, if we each had it, be any ground for carelessness, or supersede the necessity of the use of all the means of grace. Nay verily! Whatever his secret counsels may be with regard to you, and to you—and to you—this much at least, is his established decree from all eternity, more plain than any other, that the course of conduct which you pursue, whatever that course may be, will surely produce its natural and legitimate effects upon your character, happiness and destinies. And therefore, ministers have to preach with just as much earnestness, and prepare their sermons with just as much prayerfulness and care, as if there were no divine purposes at all. And it is the duty of each of these to stand at his post like the pilot of a storm-tossed ship, and make use of all his knowledge of spiritual seamanship and labor, “if by any means he may save some,” and strive hard to keep the souls committed to his charge now, from falling into the quicksands of worldly-mindedness, and now from making shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience, among the rocks of fatalism, or of infidelity. And it may be said of these men, as St. Paul said of the ancient mariners, “except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” The salvation of souls is instrumentally as much contingent upon their exertions. And further, while God’s purposes of mercy will be all accomplished, yet nevertheless, the rough winds of adversity will blow hard, and the waves of temptation will beat fiercely; and the darkness of ignorance will occasion perilous delays; and currents of worldliness and irreligion, will lead astray, and each one of the elect will have to struggle with these troubled elements—to struggle individually, and to struggle for life, as much as if there were no purposes of mercy at all. And except each one does all this, we say to them now as St. Paul said of old, they “cannot be saved.” If ever so sure that you are elected, you still must have that “anchor of the soul, which is both sure and steadfast,”—you must wait for day, lighten your bark even to the laying aside of every weight, and set your sails to take advantage of each spiritual breeze, and loose the rudder bands of the mind from the fastenings of sinful habits, and aim to thrust your way into the

haven of rest. And though all these efforts should appear to fail for a while, and appear to fail they often will; and though all your hopes seem dashing to pieces, and seem dashing to pieces they often will, you must not sit down in recklessness, but swim for precious life; or with some fragment of hope, some broken prayer, buffet with the waves, and all blinded and tempest-tossed, cease not to struggle till you reach the blissful shore. Even with such efforts, and although among the number of the righteous and of God's elect, you will seem but "scarcely saved." It is only through much tribulation and violence such as this, with every nerve and fibre of the spiritual man exerted to the utmost, that the chosen of God buoyed up by the planks of promise and fragments of the cross, supports which will bear us up through every storm, and which never can be sunk by the number that cling to them, shall all of them be finally brought safe to land.

"Then all the chosen seed,
Shall meet around the throne,
And bless the conduct of his grace,
And make his wonders known."

You can conceive perhaps of the joyful greetings of Paul and his companions, as one after another of this great multitude, each surprised to find himself alive and in safety, after so many hazards, hastened to welcome companions and friends who had seemed lost. And as "received with no small kindness," by the natives of that hospitable shore, they all gathered around that fire, and each told the story of his deliverance, and listened to that of his fellows, the wonder would continually augment, that amid all those tossings and contingencies, not one of these promised lives had been lost. Oh how they must have adored the unchanging purposes of that God of whom Paul had spoken to them. And so when at last all the children of promise from the four winds of heaven are gathered around the throne of God and of the Lamb, and brother meets the brother for whose safety he has trembled, and the mother the child of many prayers, and the wife the husband for whom she has wept, and the minister finds his joy and crown of rejoicing in many whom he has feared might die impenitent; and where each hears the other tell the story of his salvation, and relates his own,

then, oh then, shall commence that new song, ever sung, yet ever new—that song which sounds as the voice of many waters, and of harpers harping with their harps, “Blessing and honor, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

And will any of that company feel, that owing to the certainty of the Divine decrees, they might have exerted themselves less, and yet have been as safe, or reached the abodes of the blessed, had they remained careless and impenitent? Or suppose you, that any one of St. Paul’s company, either during the struggle, or after the deliverance, thought he had made too great exertions, or that the Divine purpose would have superseded the necessity of efforts such as his?

There is, however, this difference between the case in my text and the situation of the elect on earth. These men all knew that they were ordained to be saved from shipwreck, before they moved a hand or stirred a foot. Whereas, with regard to the salvation of any of us, the purposes of God are perfectly *secret*. No man can possibly know that *he* is ordained to eternal life, one iota further than he is a penitent, practical Christian. He who waits till assured of his election, to begin to lead a religious life, is just the man who is sure never to begin at all. If, therefore, to those who had each one the promise of deliverance, it was said, that except they did thus and so, they none of them could escape, how shall we, who have no such knowledge of the Divine purposes—“how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” If *they* felt the necessity of exerting each muscle to the utmost, how much more ought *we*. Could each one of us plainly read his name in the Lamb’s book of life, effort would still be necessary. How much more, when it is only by our success in these exertions, that we have the least reason to hope, that our names are inscribed there at all. Oh it is worse than folly idly to speculate about the Divine purposes, whilst those purposes are absolutely secret, and while it still remains an unimpaired truth, that the salvation of each one is just as contingent to him upon his own effort, as if there were no purposes at all.

2. Finally, we remark, that since this is the case, *the purposes of God do not impair our responsibility, or in the least relieve impenitent sinners from their guilt in trifling with religion.*

Many think themselves rather in a state of calamity, than of guilt; that they are not to blame for not striving; that it is not their duty to repent, until they feel themselves called. Sinner, dear sinner, as you value your soul, a truce with all this. You are to blame just as much as if there were no election—no purposes of God at all. The relation between cause and effect is not destroyed by the Divine purposes. The conduct you pursue, your own free choice, will produce to all eternity its appropriate effect upon your happiness. The election of God prevents no man from being saved for an instant. If you repent and embrace the gospel, you will be saved; if you do not, oh that words still plainer could be found, in which to warn you, that you will be lost. And so long as there is nothing in the purposes of God to contradict such plain truths as these, and we have proved that there is not—so long as “every one that seeketh findeth, and whosoever will may come, and take the water of life freely,” your responsibility is complete—your guilt tremendous. Such guilt as yours the fallen angels never incurred, for such a choice as yours they never had.

The sands of life are fast running down with us all; more than half the season of probation is passed in all likelihood, with most of us. And yet how many are idly speculating about the decrees of God, instead of seeking the salvation of their souls. What should we think of a drowning man who should hesitate to lay hold of a rope, because he did not know whether he were predestined or not to be drowned; or if saved, saved by that particular rope. Sinner! this is your state—tossing on a troubled ocean—“a sea that cannot rest.” At any moment you may sink to rise no more. Lay hold on the hope set before you.

Consider the case of Jonah. He was asleep, when even the heathen could have set him an example of prayer. Insensible in such a scene, when conscience might have kept him awake—when the next moment might have been his last. And is this the state of any of you? Are you recklessly bolstering yourselves up with speculations about the Divine decrees, and sleeping on the edge of destruction? Will you convert the very choicest medicines of the gospel into opiates, to lull your souls into so perilous a slumber?

Will any one of you, by most ingenious alchemy, contrive out of the merciful purposes of Jehovah, to distil your own damnation? Awake! oh strange infatuated man, ere it be too late. Rouse! rouse from this torpor. "*Arise oh sleeper, and call upon thy God.*"

Editorial Pencilings.

A MONUMENT.

When you die, (and that you will die, is one of the most certain of all earthly things,) one of three destinies inevitably awaits you. Of course I mean as regards *this* world, and not the next. As regards the next, it must be one of two: the scriptures knowing nothing of purgatory. But when our dust returns to dust, and our spirits to the God who gave them, we shall by our fellow-mortals who survive us, and follow us, either be *forgotten*, or *hated*, or *loved*. I need not ask you which you would prefer. Let me then tell you how you may erect for yourself a monument more durable than brass, honored with an inscription unlike that of a stylus of steel, or the point of a diamond, in everlasting granite. Do something that will tell on the immortal well-being of some fellow-immortal. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in the firmament of heaven, for ever and ever. God is not unrighteous that He should forget your work *and labor of love*, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to his saints, and do minister.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ADDRESS.

One of the most distinguished men of his own, or any other age or country, was Claudius Buchanan. When in the zenith of his power and influence, in connexion with the British East India Company, the largest monied Association on earth, he disposed of hundreds and thousands of pounds sterling, with the profusion with which princes throw cop-

pers to beggars. And to him, probably, more than to any other individual of modern times, is traceable the present splendid system of missionary benefactions, which look to the conversion of the world. As many of you as would like to know by what means a poor youth attained unto such honor and usefulness, say "aye." "Aye" resounds from every corner of the house. Well, I will tell you. It was his industry, economy, integrity, learning and piety; means, especially the last, the most important of all, perfectly accessible to you all. This is my exordium. My discussion is in a single sentence. When this great and good man was, as was supposed, on his death bed, looking on his little daughters, he said, among other consolations, I have this, that after my death, they may return home to Scotland, and be educated:—Where, do you think? In the palace of a prince, the mansion of a noble, a female college, a fashionable boarding-school? Where do you think? "In a Sunday school," is the answer resounding all over the house. My peroration is contained in a single short sentence: "Let us go to work." Amen!

UNLETTERED, UNSCIENTIFIC RELIGION.

It always depresses and grieves us, to hear a Christian experience, which mentions little or nothing of Christ. Between the two conversions of Andrew Fuller, one spurious and valueless, the other genuine, on which he lived and died, there are only two items of difference. They have the same convictions, alarms, fears, sighs, reliefs from terror, and peace: but the false one was *temporary*, as the morning cloud and early dew, and *said nothing of Christ*; whereas, the last was *permanent*, and *recognized* the Redeemer *throughout*. In one of our late Sunday school peregrinations, we stopped at an African church in the venerable town of Manchester, half an hour before the hour of worship, in which we remained and united. Here we met an apparently old disciple, with whom the following conversation occurred: Well my aged friend, I am happy to have fallen in with you, I reckon you have been for a long time a disciple of Christ. No master, I am an old man—was a good smart boy, big enough to attend horses, in time of Gen.

Washington's war with the British, but was not converted and baptized, till twenty years ago, under Mr. Mason's ministry at Grub-hill, in Amelia. All that time I was very wicked sir. How came you to be awakened to a sense of your condition—how did you feel then; and how did you find comfort? In his answers, he seemed to ascribe all to preaching and praying, without the slightest reference to Christ. Not one word of the Redeemer, in his person, office, or work, could we get out of him. We, for some time, paced the floor in trouble and in sorrow, when the following expedient suggested itself to our mind. Can you read the Bible? No sir. Can you repeat any texts in the Bible? Not many sir. Well now, my old friend, I am going to repeat to you three texts, and when I am done, I wish you to tell me of whom it is, that the apostle speaks, in these texts. The first is this: Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you, the forgiveness of sins, and by him all who believe, are freely justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. This is the first text. Again: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. That is the second text. The third is this: Whom we preach, warning every man, teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect, &c. This is the third text. Now I wish you to tell me, of whom you think the apostle speaks in these passages of scripture. His countenance, all at once, brightening up, like a lamp when the match is applied, "Dat sir, dat must be the Lord Jesus. Nobody else could do dat, but he." We placed this among the cases in which the unlettered narrator assumes without knowing it, that his hearer understands something that is not expressed.

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INFIDELITY'S TESTIMONY TO CHRISTIANITY:

A Sermon, by Rev. BASIL MANLY, JR, Richmond, Virginia.

"Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."
Deut. xxxii: 31.

Were some adventurer digging into the earth beneath us to discover relics of generations long buried and forgotten—relics bearing infallible marks of an antiquity of four or five thousand years—and especially should he bring forth a record legible to us, giving an account of the origin and history of the tribes who peopled the ancient world—with what intense interest and curiosity would such a monument of antiquity be regarded! Such a monument we have before us, abating only the novelty of the discovery.

This volume is the most remarkable which successive generations have treasured up for their posterity. It surpasses all others in the antiquity and completeness of its history, the sublimity and elegance of its style, the purity of its instructions, the importance of its subjects, and its adaptedness to all classes and varieties of men, learned or unlearned, old or young. It treats of things before time was, and after time shall cease. It gives the only satisfactory or rational information of the origin of all things, ourselves included, and of the destiny that awaits them in the otherwise dark and unsearchable hereafter.

It professes moreover, to come from the Author and Lord of the universe, and to communicate precepts sanctioned by rewards and punishments so vast and far reaching, that imagination itself cannot comprehend their utmost limit: for not till we have lived out eternity, and known the utmost

of infinity, shall we be able adequately to conceive of eternal life and everlasting death. This book is either false or true. If it is false, it leaves mankind in hopeless ignorance of their beginning and end, their duty, design and destiny; and the whole universe remains an unexplained and inexplicable mystery. If true, the rejector of it is in a most perilous and awful position. No question, therefore, of deeper import to a thinking man can be suggested, than whether the Bible is the word of God.

Evidence from all directions in striking profusion has offered itself as if voluntarily, in favor of the Bible. The testimony of the original eye witnesses, under circumstances precluding the possibility of mistake, and refuting the imputation of falsehood on their part, is not only entirely unimpeached by other testimony, but history has delighted to corroborate and cast new light upon the sacred narratives. Every new discovery of the relics of antiquity, every record of the past, whether found in the revered traditions of some tribe long sequestered from the rest of the world, or rescued from the moth and worm of some antique Library, or dug up by a Layard from the venerable ruins of Nineveh, sculptured thirty centuries ago, confirms the simple and accurate statements of the book of God, the God of books.—Science, whether its oracles are consulted by believer or unbeliever, returns in the end the same unerring responses. If it searches the deep things of man, and dives into the mysteries of metaphysics, after wandering through myriads of conjectures and learned absurdities, it brings back as its last and corrected result, the very picture of the soul which Paul of Tarsus gave; or if it pierces into the bowels of the earth, and seeks to exhume a record which would contradict the Bible, it finds there, in the hand-writing of the Creator himself, the sure and unmistakable evidences that the Author of nature and the Author of the Bible are one. Moreover, the events of subsequent history, brought about and seemingly controlled by human agency alone, yet accurately accordant to the predictions, prove that Providence is but prophecy fulfilled. Thus God, by his unerring wisdom and power, is making even the wrath of man to praise him, while wars, and desolations, and falling thrones, and rising dynasties, bear constant and involuntary testimony to the truth of the Bible.

Let us take another view. Christianity is represented in the Bible as a living, operating and effective agent; as capable and destined to produce great results. A simple test is offered: Has it answered its description? The decision of this question demands neither learning nor science, neither wit nor wisdom in any remarkable degree, but simply common observation, common honesty, and common sense.—That its effects have been great and unaccountable to infidels themselves, is a fact which not the ingenuity of a Gibbon could disguise, nor the impudence of a Volney deny. To the *nature* of these efforts, and their beneficent tendency, no partial nor contradicted testimony is borne; but a civilization spread as wide as Christianity, *and only so wide*, a general energy, purity and happiness unknown where Christianity is not, give undisputed and indisputable evidence. This shows that He, from whose hands man once came pure, has breathed forth this Word to be the “breath of life” to the nations, that man might again become in his sight a living soul. The good of which it is the author shows it to have come from the Author of good.

These and other evidences have been so often, so fully and unanswerably exhibited, that this bare allusion to them is all that is deemed desirable. Let us turn to living witnesses.

If we ask the friends of Christianity, they will testify, with striking unanimity, to the wonderful change wrought upon themselves, and aver that it can be none other than the fruit of the mighty power of God. Now these witnesses are credible. For, in the first place, it is a change of such a nature, that they can be entirely conscious of it—a change of feelings, of desires, of character, of which they cannot but be conscious. If a man can testify to a change or fact of which he is informed by his external senses, how much more certainly is he competent to testify to a change within himself, of which he is informed by consciousness, the very first channel of information, the primitive and essential medium of all possible knowledge. Men may deceive, but they need not be mistaken as to these things. But, in the second place, no possible motive of self interest prompts them to deceive. In the case of the first disciples, the assertion of their opinions and statement of their experience, was attended with the loss of all that man holds dear, or

ambition covets—reputation, wealth, friends, ease, life itself. And now, no civil disability belongs to him that is not a Christian, nor does any external advantage accrue to him that is; so that, unless these men reap the benefits they say they do, they obtain none at all from Christianity, and are persisting in a wilful, gratuitous falsehood, knowing it to be false, and without any prospect of advantage. Is this a reasonable supposition? But, thirdly, who are the men charged with this absurd and guilty conduct? They are men whom you would trust on any other subject, whose veracity and sound judgment are otherwise unquestioned. Can this evidence be justly set aside, or if not set aside, can its force be rationally evaded? If, in the fourth place, we consider the number and variety of these witnesses and the impossibility of collusion, in connection with the general identity of religious experience in all ages and nations, in all conditions of society and all grades of intellect, it is seen that, as each regenerate soul is competent to give an original and independent testimony to the power of the faith of the Son of God, we are “compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses,” that in rejecting Christianity, men must trample on all the ordinary laws of evidence and belief.

But now, we propose to descend from our vantage ground, to call up a different class of witnesses, and see what is the judgment of infidels themselves. “Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.”

It is a noble demonstration of innocence when extorted from the unwilling lips of opponents, and when the sentence of exculpation is forced even from a judge openly arrayed against us. *His* cause must be secure and well founded indeed, who can safely appeal not only to the candid and unprejudiced, but to the prejudiced and virulent, challenge their investigation, submit to their judgment, and come off unharmed through the fiery ordeal. The evidence of enemies has peculiar strength, for the enmity itself is our warrant that it would have been kept back had it not been irresistibly drawn forth. We ask, then, your attention, while we endeavor to present *the testimony of infidelity against itself, and in favor of Christianity.*

We need hardly observe that much of direct testimony to a cause is not to be expected from its opponents, nor indeed would it be compatible with opposition. The evidence to

be sought for is unconscious, indirect and incidental, but not less explicit and convincing for this cause.

I. The first inquiry we would make of our witness is, *How did he arrive at his present position? By what processes and means has he reached the conviction that Christianity is an imposture?*

From the professed votaries of reason, we are authorized to expect the most powerful and convincing reasons—so overwhelming as to compel the rejection of Christianity and the adoption of infidelity. Let us see if we can discover them. Can a Deist, for example, be supposed to have arrived at his belief by any thing like the following gradation of reasoning?*

“Christianity reveals a God glorious in holiness; Deism, though it acknowledges a God, yet in great measure overlooks his moral character: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity contains a professed revelation of the will of God; Deism leaves me in perfect darkness as to his will: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity exhibits palpable, obvious and simple criteria of the nature of virtue and vice; Deism envelops the nature of virtue and vice in the greatest doubt and perplexity: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity furnishes the strongest possible motives for virtuous conduct; Deism appeals only to some vague notions of the fitness of things, or to moral beauty, or to expediency, which makes a man's own sentiments and feelings, however fluctuating, his ultimate guide: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity *often* reforms profligate and vicious men; Deism *never*: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity often prompts men to schemes of the most extensive philanthropy, and compels them to execute those schemes; Deism scarcely ever devises such schemes: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity imparts principles that support men under all the trials and vicissitudes of life; Deism can have recourse to no such principles: therefore I prefer Deism. Christianity assures me of eternal existence beyond the grave; and that if it is not to me an eternal portion of felicity, it will be my own fault; Deism leaves me perfectly ignorant, let my conduct here be

* Seeking simply to present the subject as clearly and compactly as I could, and aiming at usefulness rather than originality, I have used my own language or that of others, just as either suited my purpose. Many thoughts and expressions are from Gregory, Beecher and Wilson, besides those for which special credit is given.

what it may, whether I shall live beyond the grave or not, whether such existence, if there be any, will be limited or infinite, happy or miserable: therefore I prefer Deism.—Christianity will support me under the languishments of a sick bed, and in the prospect of death with the sure and certain hope that death is only a short, though dark passage, into “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away;” Deism will then leave me sinking in an ocean of gloomy apprehension, *without one support*, in trembling expectation that the icy hand of the King of Terrors is about to seize me; but whether to convey me to heaven or hell, or a state of annihilation, I know not: therefore I prefer Deism! No, my friends, it is impossible that any man, capable of reflection, can, after tracing this contrast, say deliberately and sincerely—*therefore I prefer Deism.*”—(Gregory’s Letters, 21–22. See Fuller’s Gospel its own Witness, Part I.)

What, then, have been the reasons? Let us appeal to facts for the origin of infidelity.

In almost every instance it is found to have been, not by reasoning, not by careful examination, but by the lack of both. It has come about, neither by a conscious voluntary process of search, on the one hand, ending at some determinate boundary by which the commencement of their unbelief is marked; nor, on the other hand, by undesired doubts, pressing themselves painfully, demanding investigation, and spreading and acquiring new force with every new inquiry. If either of these were the case, it might claim some respectful consideration. But neither of them are ordinarily true. In most cases, “infidelity is not the result of sober examination and deliberate preference, but rather the slow product of an irreligious life, operating together with prejudices and erroneous conceptions concerning Christianity.” Doubts have casually arisen, (and what thing is there so holy or so certain as never to have been doubted?) and rested unconsidered and unanswered in the mind. Secret aid has been unconsciously lent to them by a feeling—not a formed idea exactly—but a sort of confused sense of its being desirable for them that their doubts should prove true. They acquire a sort of title to remain by simple undisturbed possession; and by degrees the impression becomes deeper, not in consequence of being reinforced by fresh arguments, but mere-

ly by dint of having rested longer in the mind. Such is ordinarily the Natural History of Skepticism.

Before proceeding further, I must make a distinction to prevent misapprehension. When I speak of infidels, I do not mean all men who at any time doubt the truth of Christianity. Good men may sometimes doubt for a moment, thinking men may be disgusted with the absurdities, and moral men with the immoralities of some professed Christians, and may momentarily connect this with the system itself; but so soon as they reflect, they see that Christianity is not accountable for these things, any more than the General of an army is for the treachery of the deserters, or the mistakes of the raw recruits in his camp. I do not, however, call such men infidels, though they may not be believers. I am not, therefore, alluding to such in my present discourse; but it is a serious question for them to consider, whether their want of cordial assent to Christianity does not, so long as it shall continue, as effectually and fatally debar them from its privileges and hopes, as positive disbelief.

To go more into detail, the origin of infidelity is various. In some it seems to arise, not from any mental operation whatever, but from a sort of ambition to show themselves different from the rest of the world. There is in many minds an insatiable desire to be noticed and talked about—to be distinguished for something, if it be nothing better than some eccentricity the more prized as it is the more outrageously absurd. This silly affectation of singularity sometimes develops itself in laughing at what better men reverence, and denying what wiser men believe, and frequently takes the form of professed infidelity.

We find again, among the uninformed class of young persons, some who have “glided into unbelief by careless vanity and unreflective ignorance, aided by the current of the passions.” Specious absurdities which they were not sufficiently acute to detect, or bold falsehoods which they were not sufficiently well informed to deny, have been read or heard, have sunk into their memories, gradually tainting and poisoning the mind. The patient inquiry which a subject like religion demands, was irksome and inconvenient, whereas an objection was seized at once, and remembered without an effort—so that a very small stock of wit and information might suffice to make a pretty fair show of objec-

tion, and maintain a tolerable credit for smartness. These are not properly disbelievers: they do not know enough of the Bible to disbelieve it. They have adopted doubts at second hand which they have never investigated, and bolster themselves up with difficulties which they would never have discovered, and do not now comprehend.

Yet below this vapid and weak class come the low, and the profane, and the vicious—the *ruffian infidels*, if I may use such a phrase—who outrage all decency, and subvert shamelessly all the foundations of virtue and common morality. Neither wit nor argument, neither vanity nor research, is the cause or support of their infidelity, but base and intense viciousness. At strife among themselves in all else, they agree in swearing eternal hatred to the Bible and its votaries. *It is the glory of Christianity to be opposed by such adversaries.*

We ask now the question—Who among the infidels of our age and country, or whose history you know, became an infidel through candid examination and serious, anxious and patient investigation? Is there one? Are there any who are not substantially included under one or other of the foregoing classes? If so, what is the evidence thus borne?

I have not forgotten that there are several of the literary opponents of Christianity, who have exhibited learning, perseverance and research, together with no small degree of acuteness. But their case, when closely examined, is not an exception, but a confirmation, to the principles we have suggested. The origin of their unbelief was substantially what we have described, and they then exerted their talents to find plausible grounds and reasons for their unbelief.—Several of the most prominent of them acknowledged that they had never attentively read through the whole New Testament; and if we turn from considering the insufficiency and partiality of their search to the spirit with which they sought, we find that instead of docility, their inquiries were conducted with scorn; instead of seriousness, with levity; instead of a spirit of prayer and humility, with irreligion and impiety; instead of obedience to the dictates of their own conscience and the acknowledged will of God, with habits frequently of immorality and vice.

The very writings in which they profess their unbelief, display its causes. When I see one asserting that ridicule

is the test of truth, and indulging in absurd buffoonery where angels might weep—another defending suicide, and apologizing by specious reasonings for lewdness and adultery—another unloosing at once the bonds of all virtue, and declaring that human desire is the only law of human obligation, and that might makes right—another dwelling with delight on scenes of the most abandoned iniquity, and prostituting poetry to profligacy—I need no one to inform me that these are unbelievers, nor do I require explanations of the sources of their infidelity.

The great truth we have suggested is further manifest in this fact, that should a person previously understood to be skeptical, set himself to read the Bible and study the subject on both sides, it is immediately supposed that he is becoming religious; and, to retain him in his skepticism, he is plied not with arguments and facts, but jests, and sneers, and ridicule. On the other hand, when any are reclaimed from infidelity, it is commonly by a process much more rational than what we have just described.

Are we not now justified in asserting that the mode by which men ordinarily become infidels bears testimony against infidelity, and creates a presumption of its untruth? "Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges."

II. I would ask, in the second place, *What means and efforts infidelity has used in opposing Christianity?*

Could we behold a fortress, which during thousands of years had endured the assaults of successive generations of adversaries; before whose walls army after army had melted away, and to overthrow which the utmost stretch of human ingenuity and perseverance had failed—we should not only contemplate it with surpassing interest, but regard each successive attack, and every additional means employed in vain, as bearing testimony to the strength and security of the fortress.

Now infidels have used, it may fairly be conceded, every instrumentality which they could have employed; they have made the best of their cause. They have not lacked ingenuity in forging weapons, nor skill in using them, nor perseverance in the attack, nor number, nor energy, nor self-confidence. The treasuries of learning have been ransacked to provide them for the contest. Recourse has been had,

not only to remote ages and distant lands, but even to the depths of the earth and the region of the stars. Nothing has been found too high, or too low for these adversaries.—Ridicule, omnipotent with fools, has been called to their aid. Poetry has lent its charms and logic its subtleties to grace their champions. What more could they have done that they have not done?—Nor have they been wanting in assurance. Voltaire said that he was tired of hearing that twelve men had established Christianity, and *he* would show the world that *one* was sufficient to destroy it. Paine, in the certainty that the age would adopt his views and abandon the Bible, called this the Age of Reason: but the age has shown its reason in quite an opposite course. The Bible has been more bitterly ridiculed, more fiercely opposed, more frequently burnt, than any other book; but it is among us yet to bless the nations. Like the bush that Moses saw, ever in the flames, but never consumed, it proves that “He who dwelt in the bush” is its Author and Protector. Like some noble rock, Christianity has felt wave after wave hurled with all the fury of the storm against her, only to see them fall foaming and broken at her feet. And as the violence of the waves bear testimony to the strength of the rock which they have failed to shatter or displace, so do the virulence and energy which infidelity has displayed testify to the firmness of the religion which they have not been able to overthrow. “Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.”

III. A third inquiry we would offer is, *What is the general result and tendency of the prevalence of infidelity?*

A tree bears testimony to its nature by its fruits. A principle, or doctrine, or system of doctrines, bears testimony to its character by its influence and result. Christianity has testified to her own divine lineage in this way, and fearlessly asks, “Can a good tree bring forth evil fruit, or a corrupt tree good fruit?” Let us see what testimony of this nature infidelity bears.

Had we time, we might show that there is a logical connection between infidelity and immorality; that corrupt practices are the legitimate offspring of such sentiments. If there is no God, there can be no duty; or, if there is a God, and he has given us no revelation, it may be that he has imposed upon us no law; if he concerns not himself for our

instruction and enlightenment, it is possible that he does not concern himself about our conduct, but has left us to do as we please. If the light of nature is our only guide, then to follow that nature implicitly in all its impulses and passions may be the only true morality. But we pause not on these hints, nor spend time in arguing what might rationally be expected to be the results of infidel sentiments. A simpler question is, What have been their results?

It is necessary to distinguish between coincidences and effects; to separate the usual and legitimate fruits from accidental and occasional excrescences. It may not be easy, but it is not impossible to make this distinction. The general result and tendency must be our guide.

In inquiring, on these principles, into the fruits of infidelity, our first remark is, that it is *a failure*.

Man is formed for the knowledge of truth; he ardently desires it, and grasps after it. He finds himself in darkness, surrounded on all sides by infinite mysteries, himself the mystery of mysteries. He knows not whence he is, what he is, why he is, or whither he is going. Infidelity relieves none of his uncertainty, but bids him pass all the days of his life without considering what is to befall him at its end.

He finds himself not only blind, but miserable. Longing insatiably after happiness, and impelled by a necessity of nature to seek it, he reaches forth after it in vain. Each seeks the true good in a different way, all agreeing only in this, that they have not found it. Infidelity gives him no light on this subject, presents no new or rational kind of happiness as attainable in this world, and is silent as to any other.

But yet further, man finds himself corrupt; or at any rate, if not conscious of it himself, each sees corruption in all others. How shall this disorder be healed? How shall the world be freed from vice and oppression, and this desert be made to rejoice and blossom with the roses of happiness and the lilies of purity? Does infidelity even *propose* a remedy? True, we have some vague declamations about the perfectibility of man, and a great many fine phrases about moral education, and so forth; but nothing additional to what the world has had for the last 6000 years—nothing that offers the semblance of efficiency is presented to us.—

And now, I ask, what progress or *commencement* has it made in bringing man to this perfection, in accomplishing this high and holy mission? To use the language of another, "What nation have they ever emancipated but by a revolution more terrific than despotism? What well ordered republic have they ever formed and maintained for a single year? What community have they enlightened and purified? Where are the schools and colleges for the sons of the poor which they have founded? What single family have they blessed with purer affections, and augmented industry, and domestic peace? What single heart have they ever made better by the extinction of evil passions and the nurture of benevolence? What vicious man have they reclaimed, what poor man have they made rich, what miserable man have they sustained by their philosophy, in life or in death?"—(Beecher on Skepticism, p. 130.)

But infidelity is not simply a failure; it is worse. It opposes and neutralizes as far as it can, the only influences that have ever made mankind better. It not merely does not do the work itself, but prevents those that are doing it. Admitting, as infidels must, the historical fact, that whether Christianity is an imposture or not, it has been a beneficial agent—making the nations and individuals whom it influences, purer, happier, more enlightened, and more refined than it found them—gathering in its royal progress through the earth, many, not to say most, of the wisest and best around its standard—and waging a steady, uncompromising, and, on the whole, efficient warfare against human wrong and misery—they nevertheless oppose, denounce, and hinder this Angel of Comfort, and Blessing, and Peace.

But this is not all. It does positive harm. It is not simply *a failure*, not simply *a hindrance*, but *an evil and a curse*.

If we look for particular instances, we shall find many where infidelity is obviously only the cloak and excuse of vice. The only question is, whether there are any instances to the contrary, or, rather, whether they exist in sufficient numbers to counterbalance these, and prevent their being reckoned as the average result of infidelity? We observe numbers of men once infidels and more or less immoral, who have become Christians and abandoned their vices.—We can find men who were outwardly correct, while even

professedly Christians, to whom infidelity has brought a freedom indeed, but not from wickedness—a deliverance not from sin, but from all restraint or even shame. But where shall we find the man to say, “I was once a sincere Christian, and was induced therefore to be a vicious man. I believed in a God that would surely punish the wicked, and therefore I was wicked. I believed that Christ died for the sins of men; I ardently loved Christ, and therefore abandoned myself to sin. I believed that unless I repented I was lost, and therefore I neither repented nor reformed, but indulged to the full every loose desire. But light shone on my path, and I am now an infidel, believing in no heaven, nor hell, no Redeemer, no sanctifying Spirit; and since I have discovered these things, I have been exceedingly improved, and they have led me to be sorry for and forsake my sins. And ever since I have been convinced that ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself’ was a human invention, I have obeyed it most implicitly in hearty devotion and pure benevolence?” Do we find such men?

To whom does the world look for good deeds? To the believer or unbeliever? Why should I ask? If the former does a good act, it is unnoticed, forgotten, because it forms but one of an uncounted host, a minute speck, however bright, in the galaxy of Christianity’s benefactions. It is exactly what was expected of him. But let an infidel live an outwardly irreproachable life, and exhibit some common philanthropy, and the world is surprised; and every body admires the splendor of this bright particular star, which shines so bright, because so very particular—because glimmering almost alone in unalleviated darkness.

Let us pass from individual cases to nations and communities. ‘There has been, since time began, but one government professedly infidel. That stands in the history of things that were, a solitary beacon to all posterity, blackened by flames that were only quenched with blood. For half a century philosophers and poets combined to inculcate “*liberal principles*,” under the view that the only way to emancipate the people was to obliterate religion. Aided by the corruptions and absurdities of the system then prevalent among them claiming to be Christianity, they most thoroughly accomplished their design, and made France a

nation of infidels. The result was gradual, but speedy.—The ball they had put in motion overturned the throne and despotism indeed; but it crushed also the rights and liberties of the people. Nothing was too certain to be denied, nothing too sacred to be violated, and under the sacred name of liberty, liberty itself was prostrated. Then came the end. “The National Assembly appointed a committee to inquire and report whether there were or ought to be a God. That committee reported that there could not be liberty on earth, while there was believed to be a God in heaven; that there is no God; and that death is an eternal sleep. The Assembly adopted the report, abolished the Sabbath, and publicly burnt the Bible. Then burst forth the lava flood which engulfed all in one common desolation. The Almighty One, whose being they had denied, whose worship they had abolished, whose wrath they had defied, withdrew his protection and restraint, and gave them up. Like famished tigers, they seized each upon his brother’s throat with a ferocity unrivalled in all the annals of human cruelty.—From morning till night, from night till morning, the guillotine groaned with the sacrifices, and wore off its edge in its bloody work. They proposed a revolution of reason and order; but the power that bestrode them hurried them on, and turned them into fiends and furies. They smote the rock for the relief of a famished and oppressed people; but when the crevice was opened, it ran blood instead of water. The reign of infidelity was the Reign of Terror.”—(Beecher on Skepticism.)

If such were the results of infidelity in the only instance where it has had full sway, who shall doubt or deny the testimony thus borne to its own character and influence?—“Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.”

IV. A method very frequently adopted of eliciting the testimony of an unwilling witness is simply to force him to tell the *whole* truth, to give a full account of the transaction, and see if he does not involve himself in inconsistencies and contradictions. Let us apply this test. Much has been said of the difficulties of Christianity; let us see if there be no difficulties in infidelity. *Let, then, our witness recite the creed of infidelity*, and we shall see if it requires no stretch of credulity, no blind and implicit faith. I shall not take

any of the grosser forms of infidelity as an example, for that might not be considered fair, but present the creed of a consistent Deist. Some prominent articles of a Deist's faith must be as follows:—*

1. I believe that God is a being of infinite holiness, wisdom, power, and benevolence; that his holiness and his benevolence combined, would prompt him to remove human ignorance, misery and sinfulness, by the most effectual means; that his wisdom would enable him to devise, and his power to execute, such plans; and yet I believe that he has suffered mankind in every age and country, to remain in the grossest darkness, corruption and wretchedness, for nearly six thousand years, greedily running into the blackest depths of crime, performing murderous and devilish rites, and fancying them religious services—and all this in consequence of his never having afforded them any light or aid; that a wise and good God, having created beings of vast capacity and desires, has thrown them out helpless orphans into the universe, and never sent a word or whisper of revelation, or a thought of affection after the children of his hand.

2. I believe that the Creator of this world, while he has scattered in infinite profusion over the lower orders of creation marks of his wisdom and benevolence, and has skilfully adapted them to their circumstances, has created man with faculties infinitely superior to those of other living creatures, but made him alone unsuited to his condition, a prey to doubtful anticipations and corroding cares, unsatisfied in the midst of abundance, continually longing for something, he knows not what, not within reach or in prospect, yet incapable of repressing those longings, an anomaly and bundle of contradictions utterly inexplicable. I believe that while other creatures “neither toil nor spin” for their subsistence, God has compelled man, the lord of creation, to live by the sweat of his brow and the anxiety of his mind. That is, I will not believe that God made man originally upright and happy, and that these things are the result and punishment of his fall: but I will believe that they are marks of *hard treatment* from the best of beings to the most exalted part of his visible creation. I know that there is no

* Abridged from Gregory's *Evidences*, pp. 23–25, 184–186.

possible medium between these alternatives; but I reject the former because it is reasonable and revealed in the Bible, and adopt the latter because it is revealed no where.

3. I believe that a Jewish peasant, an illiterate carpenter, who was soon after hung for his impostures, invented a system which, by the efforts of twelve fishermen, neither good, nor wise, nor great men, supplanted the prevailing religions of the world, and that without force, without support, without any circumstance or source of influence, attraction or success.

4. I believe that the book called the Bible was altogether the invention of men; that these men were not madmen, for that supposition is hardly tenable, but all shocking liars and impostors; that these wicked men have nevertheless written a book containing the purest morality the world has ever seen; that these impious blasphemers have inculcated more effectually than any others the worship of God; that these deliberate hypocrites, with amazing energy and perseverance, went about doing good, braving and often bearing the greatest present evils, not one of them ever disclosing the fraud, but supporting themselves in the daily diffusion of their admirable precepts and detestable impostures by the prospect of further hardships here, and the vengeance of the God they had insulted hereafter.

5. I believe that bad men are often made better through the influence of this strange system of lies and delusions; and that those who had been moral often become immoral, so soon as they are wise enough to free themselves from its influence.

6. I believe that a large number of the best scholars, the most acute metaphysicians, the most cautious investigators, and the most profound philosophers that ever lived, such as Grotius, Lord Bacon, Barrow, Locke, Addison, Boyle, Pascal, Euler, Newton, Stewart, Butler, and many others, were never able to detect the cheat; that though renowned for their moral and daring discoveries, and though known to have given their minds explicitly to the examination of this subject, they could never free themselves from the belief of this system of palpable imposture, which I can see, with half an eye, and almost without an examination, to be indubitably false.

7. I believe, finally, that the Ruler of the Universe has

seen this infamous imposture prevail more and more for nearly two thousand years; that he has suffered it to be accompanied by evidences to gain it credence such as no other system ever possessed, and as have convinced hundreds of men whose sense I dare not deny, and whose motives I cannot impeach; that he has caused, or allowed many surprising occurrences and coincidences, which have remarkably accelerated its promulgation; that is, I believe that, with regard to this system, the God of truth has surprisingly aided or connived at imposture. All this I acknowledge is totally irreconcilable with the obvious attributes of Deity, and with common sense; but it is consistent with Deism, and therefore I believe it.

Or suppose we take an isolated, yet fundamental fact in the gospel history, and observe what conclusions its denial involves: e. g., the resurrection of Jesus. The Deist must believe

That twelve poor men, of a despised and enslaved nation, having acted, according to their own account, in a strangely timorous and treacherous manner, were then daring enough to attack the guards, strong enough to overcome that world-renowned Roman soldiery, or wily enough to put them off their guard and steal away the body—suppositions all palpably absurd.

That, having done this, they were artful enough to convince no less than five hundred persons at once, and those the persons best acquainted with Jesus, that he was now alive, and that they were actually seeing him with their bodily eyes; and in the very place where a thousand witnesses could convict them of falsehood, where all were ready and eager to do so, and where a hundred tests offered, by which their opponents could have utterly confuted their pretensions, had they been false, they nevertheless gained adherents by thousands in a day, though the severest penalties were enforced against all that united themselves with them.

That these men in the promulgation of what they knew to be a falsehood, (for they could not be ignorant that they had stolen the body, if they had stolen it,) evinced the most remarkable earnestness and constancy, took more pains, endured more suffering, and displayed more talent than would have been necessary to establish for them a deathless reputation; and finally died as they had lived, in attestation of a

pretended fact which they knew to be no fact, and all this with a positive certainty of gaining nothing, but losing every thing by this astonishing course of conduct.

Thus we see that while the general denial of Christianity leads to conclusions which severely tax even the almost boundless credulity of an infidel, so the denial of each individual fact and doctrine of Christ involves its separate string of difficulties. The denial of miracles involves a greater miracle. The denial of the prophecies implies the assertion of the most marvellous coincidences, against which there was an almost infinite probability. And without dwelling on these and other topics connected with them, we should be almost led to infer from the difficulties necessarily connected with infidelity, that it requires the most indulgent understanding, and implicit faith, and that men are unbelievers from sheer credulity.

V. But perhaps a skeptic might be dissatisfied with our representation of his creed, though we have stated nothing but what appear to be unavoidable inferences involved in his main position. Let him, then, adopt his own representation; let him omit what he pleases, and include what he pleases, and paint his system in its brightest colors, and then let us ask, *What it is that infidelity offers us in exchange for our religion?*

A very sensible remark is related of Lord Lyttleton, when in the years of his infidelity, he was in company with a number of others of like opinion, who agreed to burn the Bible. The lot fell upon him to discharge the office; and as he reached the grate, with the book in his hand, he paused, turned and replaced it on the table. Said he, "I will not burn this book till I get a better;" a very wise conclusion!

The case of that other infidel is instructive also, who, after demonstrating very satisfactorily to himself that the Bible was an imposture, was found teaching his child the Bible. When taxed with inconsistency, he only replied, "It is necessary to teach the child morality, and I cannot do it so well in any other way as with the Bible."

Is infidelity, then, in its fairest form and best estate an adequate substitute for Christianity? Its very advocates must answer—no; for as a system, it is but a collection of negatives. Infidelity as such asserts nothing, establishes

nothing. It is powerful to destroy, but not to build up. It substitutes a shadow for a substance, a vague uncertainty for conviction, confused and fluctuating speculations for truth, and an intangible and baseless expectation for a hope which is an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast.

We hear much declamation about the uncertainties of Christianity and the conflicting opinions of those that profess to believe the Bible. This is not the place to show the sources of these disagreements; but one thing may be said, that there are several fundamental points in which all serious Bible reading Christians are agreed. Can as much be said for infidels? On the contrary, one generation and individual of them refute the positions maintained by another as incontrovertible. Lord Herbert, the earliest of the English Deists, stated six or seven principles as the doctrines of Natural Religion, which every man believed and must believe. The next that followed him refuted his scheme, and set up another to be itself replaced by the concoction of a successor, and so on till the "confusion worse confounded," out-babels Babel. Some only doubt isolated facts and doctrines of the Bible; others, discarding the Bible, profess systems of doctrines more or less meagre and imperfect, under the name of the Religion of Nature; others have risen from particular to universal skepticism, have attained the comfortable certainty that nothing is certain, and prove very conclusively that nothing can be proved. They sneer at the narrow prejudices still entralling such minds as Gibbon, and Voltaire, and Paine, whom they style "as superstitious as washerwomen." This strife among the philosophers has not escaped the observation of their own number, as will appear from the pungent language of Rousseau. "I have consulted our philosophers, I have perused their books, I have examined their several opinions, I have found them all proud, positive and dogmatizing, even in their pretended skepticism, knowing every thing, proving nothing, and ridiculing one another; and this last is the only point in which they concur, and in which they are right. Daring when they attack, they defend themselves without vigor. If you count their number, each one is reduced to himself. * * * Under pretence of being themselves the only people enlightened, they imperiously subject us to their magisterial decisions, and would fain palm upon us for the true causes of

things, the unintelligible systems they have erected in their own heads. They overturn, destroy, trample under foot all that mankind reveres; they snatch from the afflicted the only comfort left them in their misery; they remove from the rich and great the only curb that can restrain their passions; they tear from the heart all remorse for vice, and all hope of virtue, and still boast themselves the benefactors of mankind. Truth, they say, is never hurtful to man. I believe that as well as they, *and the same in my opinion is a proof that what they teach, is not the truth.*" Such is the sketch of infidelity by an infidel. "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

VI. As a concluding test, *we would ask for the testimony of infidelity at the hour of death.* There are times which wring truth from the most stubborn lips. The death bed, by common consent, is regarded as a place of truth; where, if ever, the sincere convictions of the heart speak out, and long hidden hopes, and subdued desires, and smothered fears, reveal themselves. In that hour of all others, poor human nature stretches out helpless hands for support. In that hour most anxiously do we lean over to catch some glimpse of light in the dark futurity. When flesh and heart fail, and matter and spirit part—when the eyes close on earthly scenes, and the senses are dead to earthly joys—then most do we need a rock to uphold our sinking hearts. In that hour "*their rock*" sinks beneath them; their treacherous footing is undermined by the sullen flow of the black waves of death. Many, who have shown by their corrupt lives that infidelity will not do to live by, show by the horrible despair of their death that it will not do to die by. I pause not to pain you with reciting the horrid narrations of the dying scenes of Voltaire and Paine, and others that might be enumerated. Hume and Gibbon are commonly mentioned as exceptions. They died apparently without anxiety or terror; but the silly frivolity and jests with which they eagerly occupied themselves, certainly do not demonstrate the philosopher, but incontestably betray a convulsive effort to drown serious thought. In attempting to act the hero, they played the buffoon. And these are the *best evidences, the most honorable witnesses*, to whom infidelity can refer.

The mother of Hume, having embraced skeptical senti-

ments through the arguments of her son, and being seized with a mortal sickness, wrote to him to come to her immediately; or, if he could not, to write to her such considerations as were suitable to quiet the uneasiness of her mind in view of the approach of death. He neither wrote nor answered the letter. A significant silence!

It is related that the daughter of Ethan Allen, who had been instructed by a pious mother in the principles of Christianity, while she had yet often heard the skeptical opinions of her father, being attacked by sickness, which she and all her friends at length saw must be fatal, summoned her father to the bedside, and said, "Father, you have taught me one set of views, and my mother another. I am now about to die, and appear in the presence of God. Whom must I believe—you or mother?" The stern soldier trembled with emotion; pride, and consistency, and doubt and tenderness, struggled together within him, and his mighty frame was agitated with the inward conflict; but he finally said—"Daughter, believe your mother!"

Now, it is an undeniable fact, that whether Christianity is a delusion or not, a great many persons in all conditions, of every rank of life, of all ages, sexes and temperaments, have died not only calmly, but rejoicingly through its influence; that the joy of the spirit has triumphed over the pains of the body; that death has been despoiled of his sting, and the grave of its terrors. On the other hand, was there ever an instance of a man at death repenting that he had been a Christian, wishing that he had been an infidel, and discarding the Bible with regret and remorse for having ever adopted it?

Have we not, then, reason to say with reference to this last crowning testimony of infidelity against itself, "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges?"

And now, my Christian brethren, followers of the Lord Jesus, having considered how testimony for the Bible may be wrested from enemies, we beseech you to take heed lest your conduct be turned into evidence against it. Have you this precious word of God—this glorious gospel marked by so many infallible signs of divinity? *It is God's gift to the world. The world wants it.* The perishing heathen want it. The destitute in your own land want it. From the

abodes of widowhood and orphanage, of poverty and vice, of ignorance and delusion, comes up a cry of need—of a famine all the more dreadful because producing insensibility—a famine of the word of God.

A year or two ago, tidings reached us from across the water of a nation in starvation; and our hearts were stirred to hear of the strong man and the weak, the sick mother and the helpless infant, bowed in the common agony of hunger without supply, of gnawing, maddening, famished despair, terminated only by death. Out of our abundance provisions were readily contributed, and swift vessels with active crews were freighted with the bread that was to keep a nation alive. Suppose those sailors and officers, entrusted with that gift, had tarried in port, dallying with the pleasures of home, consuming the provisions committed to them in inaction, waste and riotous prodigality, while every wind that shook their idle sails wafted to us new tidings of wretchedness, and wo, and death—what a withering, universal indignation, what a deep, terrible denunciation would have burst almost involuntarily from every heart against those traitors to God and man!

Christians, there is a starvation deeper and more terrific than that of wretched Ireland. The government of the Universe has seen the need, has provided the supplies and freighted a vessel with the bread of life; has selected a chosen crew, given into their hands the food for the life of millions, a sacred trust, and said, Go ye into all that land, and give the provision to every creature. The cry of the dying, the groans of the lost, come over the waters, and swell even around us. Why lash the waves the sluggish side of the vessel? Why tarry we here in neglect of our trust? Shall we absorb in our own purposes, or waste in inaction the time, and the talents, and the money, which might speed that vessel of salvation swiftly to the shores bestrewed with the famishing myriads?

I tremble for those who, when they have freely received, will not freely give, will not give at all. Oh, my brethren, here lies the word of life, *give it wings!* GIVE IT WINGS! and let it fly over the broad earth to scatter peace, and joy, and love in its course, and to turn this earth into heaven.

Before I close, allow one word to those who are not infidels, but not believers; not anti-christian, but not Christian.

You do not deny the gospel. I bless God for it. You admit—nay, assert—nay, believe firmly, its truth. I thank God for that. And yet, my friends, if this book is true, as you say you believe, in what a rank does it place you! Without a true faith in that Christ whom it reveals, it tells you you are lost. “He that believeth not shall be damned.” “The fearful and unbelieving,” are classed as to their future destiny along with the “abominable, and murderers, and idolators, and all liars,” and “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Oh rest not in the conviction that the Bible is a revelation from God; but apply yourselves to learn and obey that revelation. Content not yourselves with knowing that there is a Christ, a Holy Spirit, a heaven to be gained, a hell to be shunned; but receive that Christ as your Saviour, submit yourselves to the sweet drawings of that blessed Spirit, seek that heaven with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength—seek it first, seek it now, before heaven and hope are at once barred by unexpected and remediless death. ‘Thus may this blessed gospel be to you a savor of life unto life, and not of death unto death.—Amen!

THE DUTY OF BELIEF.

If it is not your duty to believe the gospel, so as to be saved by it, it must be either because you are not required to do it, or because it is deficient in evidence, or because you are not possessed of the faculties necessary for believing. To suppose the last is as ridiculous as to suppose that a religious man has two sets of intellectual faculties—one understanding and one memory, for example, for understanding religious facts and truths, and another understanding and memory for other facts and truths. To suppose the first would be in opposition to the whole tenor of the Bible. And as regards the second, the evidence in this case is, to say the least, as good as has ever been adduced to sustain any fact or any truth in Moral or Natural Science.

The impediment will be found to be always, either in the want of attention to the evidence, or in the prejudice with which it has been considered. Inattention itself is sufficient

to account for all the unbelief which prevails in christendom. This is always voluntary, and its moral qualities are as bad as those of unbelief itself. Inattention is in fact a pre-judgment of the case—a determination not to listen to evidence for fear of conviction.

That man that is not responsible for his belief, is one of the most alarming forms skepticism can assume. It has but one single plea, which, although a thousand times refuted, is still repeated—that faith is not a voluntary act. That faith is involuntary, may be true; and yet it may be true, that we are responsible for belief or unbelief, just as the voluntariness or involuntariness of love has no sort of connection with the duty of parental or filial affection. That we are not responsible for our belief is a proposition of which every rational man ought to suspect the logical accuracy, whether he can discover the fallacy or not. If we may believe what we choose, without being accountable for it, we may also entertain what opinions we choose, without being accountable for them, even to God. If so, why may we not act as we choose, inasmuch as acts are the necessary result of opinions and belief?

It is in view of such truths as these, we read, “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”—The Apostles have decided that not to believe God, is to make him a liar: language so awful, that but for its being inspiration, we should fear to utter or record it. What would be thought of a child, who should thus treat an earthly father of unquestioned veracity, speaking to him unquestionable truth—speaking it in love—truth involving the best, the whole interests, of the child himself?

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GOD GLORIFIED BY THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS:

A Sermon, occasioned by the death of REV. THOMAS MEREDITH, delivered in the Baptist church in Newbern, N. C., November 24, 1850, by REV. J. M. C. BREAKER, pastor. Preached and published by request of the church.

"This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."—John xxi: 9.

DEATH, even under the most favoring circumstances, is naturally looked upon as a calamity. Whether it be regarded simply as the termination of this present life, or as the beginning of a new and untried existence—whether we behold in it the consummation of the ills, the sorrows and the disappointments of this mortal state, or the harbinger of undisturbed peace and tranquility to the departing spirit—it is yet a painful necessity, whose awful mystery uninspired nature must in vain strive to unravel, and to which even a Christian faith needs all the light and the incentives of heavenly wisdom, to be fully reconciled. To the thoughtful and reflecting mind, this approaching and inevitable destiny is never entirely lost sight of. It is present alike in his hours of trouble, to assure him of their destined change; and in his moments of delight, to remind him that they, too, must have an end. All around him, and on the wings of every hour, he beholds the record of this common fate of all sublunary things. Gladly, then, does he welcome any ray of truth, which may mitigate the gloom of death, or turn its dusky shades into the twilight of approaching day. Thanks be to God, this has been fully accomplished by the glorious gospel of his Son. By it the enemy has been con-

quered, and the trembling victim delivered from his fatal power. The viper, though not yet destroyed, has been deprived of his sting, and now lies harmless at our feet.—“The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” But the power of the gospel stops not here. Not satisfied to avert the calamity, it has turned it into a blessing! The cloud that has hung in gathering darkness over the heavens, and in tones of muttering thunder threatened vengeance in its approach, has at length descended in gentle showers on the earth beneath, bringing with it the elements of life and cheerfulness, and leaving only the impress of that parental care which our guilty fears had converted into wrath. Such is death to the Christian believer—a rich inheritance—the channel of spiritual glory—the medium of high and holy achievement!—Does he doubt this? He hears it in the language of inspired confidence, “All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death*, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” “For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain.” And from our text we learn what is more than all this: that by death we accomplish the great end of life—the glory of God.

With thrilling distinctness had the Saviour indicated to that devoted disciple the manner in which he was to terminate his earthly career; not in the calm retreat of the domestic circle, with the hand of affection and sympathy to smooth down the dying brow, and hearts of tender endearment to watch the last glimmer of expiring life, and on wings of anxious prayer to waft it homeward to the bosom of its God; but far away from all the charities of human care, amidst the rage of persecuting idolatry, and under the cruel tortures of a felon’s cross! “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.” Thus did Peter glorify God by his death—in bearing testimony to the truth and efficacy of the gospel, and in sealing that testimony with his own dying blood.

Though in the good providence of God, my brethren, we are not called to share the trials and honors of martyrdom, yet it is no less our privilege and duty, as it is the privilege and duty of every Christian, to glorify God in death. If we are Christians, this we certainly shall do; and that form of death which will best accomplish this, is the one which God has appointed us. *This is the doctrine of the text.*

1. In an assurance like this, my brethren, who can fail to perceive *a consideration well suited to mitigate the gloom of death, and transform that King of Terrors into a messenger of peace?* For what is that which gives to life itself its chief value? Is it not the opportunity it affords of glorifying God? It is for this end that we are sent into the world—that we are endued with reason and conscience, made heirs of immortality, the lords of all inferior things, and, in the scale of moral being, but “little lower than the angels” of heaven. What is this but the end of all created things throughout the boundless universe of God? The myriads of worlds that move in illimitable space, with every being that inhabits them—day and night—summer and winter—the gentle gale and the furious storm—the things of water, earth and air—all are made to declare the glory of God, and show forth his matchless wisdom, power and skill. It is in offices like these that heavenly hosts of pure and exalted spirits around the throne of the Eternal find their chief delight—their constant employ. It was this that brought the Redeemer from the courts of heaven to this lower world to suffer, and bleed, and die; to bear the shameful cross; to wash away our sins in his own precious blood; and to stamp upon the circling heavens the glow of sacred, holy, heavenly love. For this are souls redeemed, renewed and saved, “that they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.”—It is this that constitutes the first, the last, the ever present motive of the truly grateful heart. Conscious of its infinite obligations—its debt of eternal gratitude for the life, the hopes, the bliss of the Saviour’s dying grace, it pants for nought but the freedom of sinless perfection to honor God, and the power of angelic tongues to proclaim the riches of redeeming love. If, then, by dying we may accomplish this great end, who should not be willing to die? What, then, is death but life’s true echo—its note of praise in that

universal chorus, which heaven and earth, and all that in them is, are ever sounding forth to the majesty of God! If such be death, it does not close the business of our life—it does not even intermit the work which is assigned it, but only gives new form to the mode of its operations. It only conducts the worshiper from the outer courts of the great temple of God's praise, one door nearer to the Holy of Holies—the inner sanctuary of the Divine presence, to view with more admiring eyes the glories of that matchless grace which forms the soul for such a blest employ!

2. But is the assurance, my brethren, that death will accomplish all this, well founded? Is it certain that every Christian may hope to honor God in the hour of his departure from this world? And if so, wherein does that much dreaded messenger perform for us this high and holy office?

The truth of this, apart from the teachings of our text and of the scriptures generally, might be inferred from the nature of the Divine Being. He has made nothing in vain.—Whatever he does must tend to honor him, for this is the most exalted end for which any thing can exist. Now death is the decree of God. "He has appointed our bounds that we cannot pass." Is it likely, then, that an event which himself has planned, and which carries with it so much of deep and thrilling interest, shall be turned to no good account—shall fail to minister to the glorification of his own Divine excellence? "*All thy works shall praise thee, O God, and thy saints shall bless thee.*" Such was the "earnest expectation and hope" of the apostle Paul, "that with all boldness Christ might be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death." And lest this should be thought applicable only to himself, he assures us, "that no man, (that is, that no Christian,) liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; but whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." For this reason is it said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

God is glorified by whatever serves to manifest his character, and communicate his will to men. The death of his saints does this in a manner deeply solemn and impressive to the attentive observer. Who can fail to tremble with reverential awe at his *almighty power*, as displayed in the death of his saints?—a power which defies all resistance; which no human strength, not even the energy of prayer, a

life of faith, a character of unspotted purity, can arrest, or, for a moment, detain from executing its firm decree. How strongly does the death of the saint mark the *justice* of God, as a Being who will execute with rigid scrutiny the penalty of his violated law; the literal demands of which no tears of penitence, no subsequent reformation, no works of pious zeal, not even the blood of atonement, can stay. Here, too, is seen, in lines of soothing tenderness, the record of his *wisdom and love*, in providing an antidote for the evils of this our inevitable lot, and that, too, at the sacrifice of his only begotten Son—in making the bed of death the cradle of a new and happier life—the highway to scenes more rich in soul-felt blessedness than those which dwelt in Eden's lovely bowers. And here it is that the Christian experiences and illustrates most fully the *truth and faithfulness* of God, as the Author of those many sweet and precious promises contained in his word. The promises of God to succor, sustain and comfort, to be ever present with his people, are never forgotten by him; every moment of our lives we experience their fulfilment: but it is reserved for a dying bed and a dying hour to make us feel this as we have never done before. Then it is that all human strength fails us—the streams of earthly good are dried up, and the water of life fresh from the fount of God, flowing in rich abundance through the channels of his sacred word, alone can refresh and satisfy the thirsty soul. Then it is that the faithfulness of God shines forth with cheering lustre as we descend into the valley of death; and the glimmering light of faith is lost amid the glories of eternal fruition!

3. But *there is a special form of death appointed to every child of God.* The manner in which he shall die is as definitely fixed as the death itself. Nothing can befall the Christian without the Father's notice and permission.—Even “the hairs of his head are all numbered.” It cannot be, then, that death, that event in which he feels the most anxious concern, is left to the control of chance, or the unaided direction of human agency. No, this would be contrary to all his dealings with his people, and in direct contradiction to the excellent character he bears as the Sovereign Lord of all. If, then, the death we must die is appointed of God, and if God in all his works has his glory in view, does it not follow that the particular death assigned the

Christian will be such as in his case is best suited to glorify God? It was for this end that Peter died as he did. And what is true of Peter is true of all Christians, for God is no respecter of persons; and he has the same object for each of them to accomplish. Thus are we furnished with the means to account for every particular form of death—for every step and progress which marks the exit of the dying believer from this world to the next. Though it may not be plain to us now, the time is coming, my brethren, when we shall clearly perceive that every thing connected with our departure into eternity—as, the causes which led to it, their effects upon our minds, and the season of their operation—was thus ordained for the best and easiest ends; for our own good and for the glory of God. Bearing *this end* in view, much that otherwise would seem awfully mysterious in the death of God's people, admits of a satisfactory solution. Often are we astonished to see the young, gifted and promising disciple, cut off at once in the midst of labors that might have resulted in eminent good to the world, and in promoting the glory of God, while others of far less importance, whose loss would be scarcely felt or deplored, live on in undecaying vigor to old age. How, we are ready to ask, can this be for the glory of God? But may not the very feelings which prompt the inquiry be suited to accomplish this end? Is it not for the good of man and the glory of God, to know that he is a Sovereign who exercises his pleasure and uncontrolled sway in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth? But this is not all that it teaches us. We are prone to confide too much in the strength, the gifts, and the graces of men, and to ascribe the glory of the success less to the power and Spirit of God than to the human instrument which he is pleased to employ.— Sometimes he sees this *would be* the case, and he takes away the instrument beforehand to prevent the idolatry it would occasion. At other times, when this might not follow, he does it to remind us that in the Lord only should we put our trust. Then again the hand of affliction is laid upon the Christian and his life threatened with speedy extinction, yet he lingers on for many years in constant retirement, shut out from the world and all its busy scenes, and at length passes away in advanced life to enjoy the vigor of eternal youth; while another in the midst of seeming peace

and safety, and without a moment's warning, is hurried into the presence of the Great Judge. But has this no lesson for the Christian? It assures us on the one hand that amidst all our frailty, disease and danger, we are in the hands of One, who holds in his own power the "issues of life and of death," that

"Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit;"

while on the other hand, it bids us trust not in length of days or flight of years, but live every day as if it were to be the last. Turn your eyes in another direction, and you behold a servant of God as he is about to descend into the gloomy vale. The way is rough and difficult, pain and anguish shake that frail abode, and the anxious spirit takes its flight amidst the struggles and convulsions of agonizing nature; while here we look upon the placid brow, the closing eye, the still and motionless form of the dying saint, as, without a struggle or a groan, he sinks gently to rest, like a clear and cloudless sun, as he ends his race and sinks in quiet grandeur beneath the western hills. But in this, too, God is glorified; for it tells that "death is the wages of sin," and that grace only can fit us to bear that trying hour; and yet that "Jesus can make our dying bed as soft as downy pillows are." Did all die alike, these important lessons could not have been taught, nor the glory of God thereby promoted.

4. But there is still another view in which the death of the Christian glorifies God; that is, *as the termination of a life of pious usefulness*. Our influence in death will be in proportion to our influence in life. If we would glorify God by our death, we must honor him in our life. We must endeavor to leave the world better than we found it. Then shall we leave behind us a name and example, which will live while our bodies are mouldering back to dust, and generations to come will bless God for having sent us into the world. The power for good which such a life exerts, is not destroyed, but only increased by death, as the fragrance of the flower is made sweeter when crushed, or as the light dimmed by the shade is made brighter by its removal. The death of a fellow-being naturally reminds us of our common brotherhood as the sharers in the same origin, the same ills,

the same nature, and the same destiny. In this way it excites our sympathy and moves the hand of charity to draw a veil over the faults of the departed, and to elevate and cherish the memory of their virtues. Thus it is that God has implanted in our very natures the principles which must give to piety and excellence, even in this life, a green and glorious immortality. The truly good man, however humble and obscure his position, cannot leave the world without making some heart feel and confess that there is a power in godliness and a beauty in holiness which death cannot destroy, and which all the learning, the talents, and the genius of this world can never acquire. And he, therefore, who has meekly followed Jesus, treading the path of holy zeal and tender charity which he trod, and has thus closed his faithful pilgrimage, at peace with himself, at peace with God, and at peace with all mankind, has left to the world a legacy more precious than gold—a monument more enduring than sculptured marble—and an offering to God richer far than all the sacrifices that ever smoked on Jewish altars. O! there is in such a death something which fills all heaven with gladness, and calls down the blessing of God to men.

It was such a death, we trust, that closed the earthly labors and toils of our brother, whose late departure from this world forms the theme of our present meditations. The Rev. THOMAS MEREDITH is no more. But though dead, he yet speaketh, in the godly life, the pious example and useful labors, which marked his earthly career. These he has left us. We can now do him no good; his ears are deaf to our voice, and his heart is cold in death. Nor does he need from us or any human tongue the praise which only words can give. A higher plaudit, doubtless, he has already received from his Saviour above, and his name is recorded in the bright pages of the Book of Life. The memory of his deeds can never perish—can never fade away; and these merit from us the tribute of sincere respect and sorrowing admiration. In the praise of men it is not right to indulge, but in the praise of their *virtues* we may indulge, for these are the fruits of the Holy Spirit—the trophies of divine grace.

Brother Meredith was born in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, not far from the city of Philadelphia, July 7, 1795.—

He pursued his academical studies at Doylestown, Pa., and was graduated at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, January 1816. While receiving his education, it was his intention to choose the Law as his profession, but from this purpose he was dissuaded by impressions consequent upon his religious exercises and profession, which took place at the age of about 18 or 19 years, when he was baptized in Philadelphia by the Rev. W. Staughton, D. D., then pastor of the Sansom Street Church, under whom he soon after pursued his theological studies preparatory to entering the Christian ministry. By this church he was licensed to preach, December 30, 1816. He first came to the South in the year 1818, and was ordained at Edenton, North Carolina, on the 22nd of November of the same year; at which place and time, he was employed by a Missionary Society to travel as a home missionary in various parts of the State. It was under the appointment of this Society that he first came to Newbern, in November 1818, where he preached, as a missionary, for six months; at the end of which time a competent salary was raised by the church, and he was accordingly settled as pastor. The church, which for several years had had no regular pastor, on his coming here, had but two members that resided in Newbern, and but few elsewhere. Under the labors of brother Meredith, it was more completely and permanently organized; the church edifice, which was a mere shell, in an entirely unfinished state, was completed, and during his short stay of three years and six months, he baptized thirty whites and several colored persons. Out of this number several have moved away—several have gone before him to heaven—several, alas! “walk no more with us”—and two only, of all that number, are now living members of the church. But many of you remember his labors of love—his active, energetic, persevering efforts to do good, and to advance the cause of truth in your midst. These gave him a place in your confidence and esteem which he will ever occupy; yes, and they have met their bright reward in a better world. Rarely does a minister enjoy more popularity with his church and the community, than did your pastor at that time; and you will not think it too much to say, that rarely does a minister more truly merit such popularity. The Newbern church is greatly indebted, through the grace of

God, to the labors of brother Meredith for whatever of prosperity it has since enjoyed. From Newbern he went to Savannah, Georgia, where he remained for several months as pastor of the church at that place. In 1826 he was called to the pastorate of the Baptist church at Edenton, where he remained nine years. It was here that he commenced the publication of "The Baptist Interpreter," the first Baptist paper ever published in North Carolina. He received and accepted a call the second time to become the pastor of this church, in June 1834, which office he continued to occupy for two years. During this period, the publication of the Biblical Recorder was commenced, which for several years was the denominational organ of the Baptists of both North and South Carolina. In 1840, brother Meredith removed to Raleigh, where he resided until his death, which occurred on Wednesday, Nov. 13, in the year 1850, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

Both as a Preacher and an Editor, brother Meredith labored long, zealously and successfully for the good of souls and the glory of God in North Carolina, and to these labors is our denomination, in this State, largely indebted for its position of influence and respectability.

The distinguishing traits of brother Meredith's character, mentally and morally, were striking and somewhat peculiar. He possessed a mind remarkably clear and accurate in the investigation and treatment of a subject, and a judgment judicious and rarely at fault. His reasoning powers were of the first order; and when used in controversy or in repelling or combatting error, were almost irresistible. His feelings were quick, warm and tenacious. Perhaps, it was this combination of qualities that gave his productions, at times, the appearance of severity. With a clear perception of the reason of things, not equally plain to other minds, he was naturally inclined to press his views with a confidence, which might bear a tinge of impatience. Yet, it was in this particular that much of his usefulness consisted. He was a stern advocate of the truth. For error in any form he had no sympathy and no toleration. In the language of the great Apostle, used of himself, he seemed to be "set forth for the defence of the gospel." Yet he had a heart of tenderness and friendship for those who desired and deserved it, and a benevolence commensurate with the

family of man. As a preacher, he was clear, forcible and earnest. Learning, with him, was only the handmaid of truth, while his great aim seemed ever to be to magnify the word and grace of Christ. He was emphatically a Bible Christian—a Bible preacher—and a Bible writer. His close conformity to the letter and spirit of the “law and testimony” may have given him some peculiar modes of thought and expression, which to those less rigidly scriptural than himself, savored of a want of strict orthodoxy. But as a man, a Christian, a preacher and an editor, he certainly possessed much to admire—much that is worthy of our imitation. That he had faults, is but to say he was human. But if he thus had what all others have, may it not also be said, that he had what all others have not, virtues enough to overbalance them. By these let him be judged.

The loss of our departed brother will be deeply felt; and not soon will his place be equally as well filled. But he has gone. God has taken him. He rests from his labors, and his works do follow him. We will not wish him back again. No, in that bright world of bliss he now tastes the sweets of spiritual joy, unmixed with sin, with sorrow or with care. His race is run; his warfare is ended, his journey is completed: there let him rest till he shall welcome the loved and left behind—

“Where no farewell tear is shed.”

We shall all, my dear hearers, meet him at the bar of God. Oh, let us seriously ask ourselves, how shall I then appear? Will it be as a penitent, believing, pardoned sinner, or as a heedless neglecter of the great salvation? In one or the other of these characters you must all stand before the Judge of the quick and dead, to give an account of the deeds done in the body—of the blessings received—and of the privileges improved or unimproved. Some of you, in that day, will remember the faithful reproofs, instructions and exhortations of that departed servant of God, as he proclaimed to you the “unsearchable riches of Christ.” Are you prepared for that event? If not, what will be the memories of that trying hour! Ah, dreadful will be the reckoning of that day! The best of us will need all the efficacy of Christ’s atoning blood to prepare us to stand accepted before that great white throne. But, thanks be to

God, this is sufficient; this is available for all. The chief of sinners need not fear, if trusting in Jesus. God give us hearts of confidence in this only refuge of safety, that, when the tempest of a dying hour, and of approaching judgment, shall descend upon us, we may rest in peaceful hope and sustaining grace, cheered by the assurance of Divine forgiveness, and quickened into a waiting readiness for death and eternity by the prospect of heavenly rapture. Then may you rejoice in that death by which you will best glorify God, and with the confidence of a triumphant faith exclaim: "I have fought a good fight—I have finished my course—I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day! Amen.

RELIGIOUS SYMPATHY:

A short Sermon, by Rev. HENRY KEELING.

"How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"—Esther viii: 6.

An edict had gone forth from the king, Ahasuerus, "to destroy," "from India to Ethiopia," "young and old, women and children—all the nation of the Jews." The language of our text is part of the pathetic appeal made to him by Esther the queen, petitioning the reversal of this edict.

The history of the case is briefly as follows: Haman, prime minister, is honored next to the king. All, as they pass, do him reverence, except Mordecai the Jew, whose conscientious obedience to the law of his God forbids him. Haman accuses him, and disdaining the destruction of an individual, seeks the annihilation of his race. He proposes to the king to issue a decree to this effect, and offers to incur the expense. The decree is made and the expense assumed by the king.

The providence of God interposes in a remarkable manner. Haman superstitiously consults the soothsayers as to *the time when* this cruel edict shall be executed. The lot postpones it *eleven months*: thus affording opportunity for the intervention of the means of redress. But the decree

goes forth, and includes Esther the queen, who was herself a Jewess.

This lady, whose ancestors had been carried captive from Jerusalem to Shushan, had been educated by Mordecai, her uncle; and had by him been introduced to the king as a candidate for the relation of queen, in place of Vashti, who had been divorced, ostensibly, for disobedience, but really because she had refused to grace a drunken frolic by exposing her beauty to the gaze of intoxicated nobles. Her uncle clothes himself in sack cloth—appears before the gates of the palace—and urges that she shall petition the king. On the grounds that she had not been admitted to the presence of the king for thirty days, and that she must perish if she fails to meet the approbation of the golden sceptre, she refuses.

Mordecai's rejoinder is full of momentous lessons. He answers, that she herself was included in the decree—iv: 13—that if at this time she held her peace, relief would come from some other quarter—ver. 14—and that God had probably raised her to the throne for this very purpose—ver. 14. She then agrees to make the petition, if all the Jews would, for three days and nights, fast and pray for her success. "If I perish, I perish." She approaches, meets the golden sceptre, and is bidden to declare her wish, if it be half the kingdom. She merely solicits the company of the king and of Haman, the next day at a banquet which she should prepare.

Now the providence of God again interposes to defeat the scheme of wicked Haman. In the night the king is deprived of sleep—he sends for the chronicles—those very portions are read which reveal the forgotten story of Mordecai's discovery of a conspiracy threatening the life of the king, for which fidelity he had never been rewarded. The result is, that Haman is executed on the very gallows which he had erected for Mordecai; and although the decree is not reversed because the laws were unchangeable, a counter decree is issued, putting the Jews upon their own defence, and thus the nation is saved.

We avail ourselves of this little narrative to inculcate some great moral truths. A decree has gone forth from the court of heaven threatening a destruction which includes our kindred. Religion, sympathy, humanity itself, dictates

that we should do all we can for their relief. Although we can do nothing towards reversing the old decree, yet we may do much towards the execution of a counter decree, which has already been issued, putting the condemned upon their own defence, by providing means of their safety.

We remark therefore,

1st. The destruction which is threatened against an ungodly world, includes *our kindred*.

2ndly. The questions arise, "Can we do any thing for their relief?" and if so, "What?" We shall invert this order, and consider the last first.

1. "Can we do any thing for their relief?" and if so, "What?" That we can do something, yea, much, may be inferred from the general principles of the divine government, as a system of means. Some blessings God confers immediately, without the agency of others—as the sunshine, and the rains and dews of heaven. But the great mass of his bounties he confers through the agency of others: not only of kindred, neighbors and fellow-citizens, but often strangers. Especially is this feature prominent in the gospel. The salvation of all, is through the obedience and sufferings of One. In the whole economy of the gospel, God speaks to men through inspired men, whose thoughts are reiterated by the uninspired. It is thus that faith is communicated: read Rom. x: 17, and Heb. iv: 2. It is thus that hope is begotten: read 1 Pet. i: 3 and 23rd. It is thus that sinners are plucked as brands from the burning: read Jude i: 23.

All the means within our power, are reducible to two classes. *First*. Our ministry towards the individuals themselves. This we fulfil, by instruction, exhortation, example, &c. And *secondly*, our ministry towards God on their behalf: we pray for them.

It is this means that I beg you to consider to-night. And I will try to illustrate and enforce its importance.

When God was "offended"—when "his wrath was kindled"—against Job's friends, Job could do for them what they could not do for themselves: he could pray for them. Job's prayer God would accept—their's he would not.—They could offer bullocks and rams in sacrifice; but they could not pray: Job was to pray *for them*.—Job. viii: 10.

Beckerstith in his little work on prayer, mentions that

Rev. Mr. Romeine was accustomed to devote two hours every Friday to special prayer for his friends—that he had the names of those for whom he prayed on a bit of paper, and that he walked forth and back, repeating them before the Lord. Thus it was, from the earliest period of olden time. Abraham understood, and practiced it. He prayed for *Ishmael* by name, and was answered by *name*. Knowing that the Messiah should descend from Isaac, and fearing that there might therefore be no blessing for Ishmael, he prayed. “O that Ishmael might live before thee!” The answer is, “As for Ishmael, behold I have heard thee, and behold I have blessed him, and will multiply him exceedingly.”—Gen. xvii: 18.

On this branch of my subject, I have only a single suggestion to offer. The efficacy of prayer does not depend on the multitude of those who pray. I have often thought it a sublime sight to see a few females on a week day, threading their way through the crowded streets of a busy and anxious city to the house of God to invoke the blessing of God on others. A crowd would lessen the moral grandeur of the scene. A crowd may go any where, each to see the rest. Here all go to hold audience with God, touching matters of vastest moment affecting others.

2ndly. How can we endure to see the destruction of our kindred? Religion increases natural sensibilities and sympathies. Whatever appertains to us personally, most affects us. The report of an earthquake 10,000 miles off, engulfing a million, would affect you less than the loss of an eye or a little finger. The former you would forget in a day—the latter would deprive you of your rest. A steam-boat disaster on the Mississippi or the ocean, distresses you. But how much is the distress augmented if you fear that your husband, or wife, or child, or some dear friend was on board?—Religion justifies the indulgence of this feeling of our nature. Natural ties are to philanthropy what cohesive attraction is to gravitation: they are not only compatible, but parts of a whole. The benevolence which makes us labor, and give, and weep for the heathen, if we neglect our own, is at least doubtful.

On no principle can we endure such a sight, unless, (if indeed then,) we have done all in our power to avert so awful a catastrophe.

EDITORIAL PENCILINGS.

The word of God is *plenary* without being *prolix*. It is *plenary*: for it contains every thing *necessary* to a perfect system of religious faith and practice. And it is not *prolix*; it is not cumbered, nor superabundant, nor unnecessarily amplified. These are certainly two most invaluable qualities: that it contains *every thing requisite*, and *nothing unnecessary*.

Hence the criminality of either increasing or diminishing the divine law. For although in Rev. xxii: 18, 19, the Apocalypse, rather than the whole scriptures, may be primarily intended, doubtless our Lord meant this to be the close of inspiration; and the same respect is shown by Christ and the apostles to every part of the whole code: the law—the prophets—the Psalms—the gospels—and the epistles.

Let us dwell a little on this highly interesting combination of qualities, and the obligations it imposes. That this combination does exist, we might suppose even though it were not explicitly stated. For were it to be left to uninspired judgments *to add to* religious doctrine and precept, we should be burdened with ponderous encyclopedias, from the rubbish of which we could never select the pure truth, but by being ourselves divinely inspired: and he who may abridge the Bible by rejecting *one truth*, or duty, may, upon the same principle, proscribe the whole.

This great truth—the sufficiency of the gospel—condemns the credulous man, who believes what is not revealed, and the incredulous, who disbelieves what is revealed—him who mixing up truth with falsehood, receives all as truth, and him who rejects the whole truth. It condemns the sectarist, who deems the opinion of some favorite doctor infallible as the lessons of the apostles. And it condemns those presumptuous expositors and critics, who, with sacrilegious hand, plunder the temple of truth by abolishing both baptism and the supper; or who multiply two ordinances into seven; or who substitute human inventions for the ordinances of the gospel.

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THE ROOT AND OFFSPRING OF DAVID:

By REV. H. E. TALIAFERRO, pastor of the Baptist church, Talladega, Alabama.

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"I am the root and the offspring of David."—Rev. xxii: 16.
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None should be astonished that the Christian church was threatened to be overwhelmed with error so quickly after the apostolic age. We only marvel that the unholy leaven was not developed much sooner. But for the leaven of truth which was thrown into the world by Messiah and his apostles, which acted as a counter influence, the whole would have been leavened at an earlier period in church history. The superior power of truth over error is clearly seen, when it is remembered what a small amount was taught the world by the first heralds of salvation; compared with the wide spread dominion of error, its deeply seated, and constantly cherished influence in the human heart. If what little "salt," little "light," and little leaven of truth, was in that age imparted to the world, wrought such wonders, sustained such a combat, and lifted up such a standard against the mighty flood of error, its omnipotent strength may be easily inferred. And since truth, after having lain so long trodden under foot in the "streets of the great city," has ascended to heaven in the sight of its chagrined enemies, its moral power is perfectly demonstrated.

The wide-spread and blighting influence of error, was a subject of prophecy; and its near approach did not escape the vigilant eye of Paul, the apostle. He saw the "mystery

of iniquity already at work." To his deep mortification a Hymeneus and an Alexander had made "shipwreck of the him and the truth : in these and in others he observed the faith." Phygellus and Hermogenes had turned enemies to corrupting influence of Judaism and oriental philosophy, and knew well the ultimate result.

But to no prophet or apostle were the fortunes of the church so fully revealed as to John, in the isle of Patmos. He was constituted, by the decision of the glorified Jesus, the greatest ecclesiastical historian of the age. His history extends from the "visions in the spirit on the Lord's day" to the consummation of the remedial reign of exalted Messiah. Having outlived all the apostles of the Lamb, he had seen more of the injurious consequences of heresies and of the mischievous workings of the "mystery of iniquity," he therefore, lifted up his warning voice to the "seven churches of Asia," and through them to all the congregations of Christ. From the desolate rocks of Patmos, these heart-searching messages have sounded, and will sound out in every department of Jehovah's redeemed commonwealth.

Error, like the fabled Hydra, has many heads ; and as the Arian head of the monster was but then developing itself, the last chapter of Heaven's church history, and Jehovah's canon of salvation, is to it a fatal blow. As though heaven's most powerful engines, pointed by the *last* declarations, the farewell speech of the holy Jesus, was to be reserved and diverted against that heaven-daring, God dishonoring, soul-destroying doctrine. And a more pointed disavowal, a more complete refutation of Arianism, with its various aspects, socinianism, unitarianism &c., cannot be found in Holy Writ, than the words of the text, "I am the root and the offspring of David."

In this discourse I propose,

I. To speak of the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

II. Of his human nature.

I shall not perplex the hearer with scholastic terms, nor darken counsel by multiplying interpretations ; but take a scriptural view of the two propositions.

1st. Then, the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Paul regarded the divinity of Jesus to be "God manifested in the flesh." And without the least reserved declared, that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." With these

palpable declarations, we might rest the subject ; but for the carping of vain and proud minds who affect not to believe propositions which they cannot understand. Hence the advocates of truth are compelled to amplify plain truths ; and “with sound speech instruct them that oppose themselves,” and to stop the mouths of gainsayers.” I will, therefore, amplify this subject somewhat, and exhibit some of the proofs in favor of the divine nature of the Son of God.

1. The figurative language of scripture in reference to him. “I am the root and the offspring of David.” “The lion of the tribe of Judah,” “the root of David.” “And in that day thou shalt see a root of Jesse, which shall stand as an ensign for the people.” Nothing can be clearer than those illustrative figures. None knew better how to convey and impress truth upon the understanding than Messiah, and his discourses abound in illustration. And the Spirit of God, in the above quotations, by a figure the most natural and forcible, intended to illustrate and prove the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ. As God, he is the root of Jesse and David ; and as man he is their offspring ; and the lion of the tribe of Judah, according to Jacob’s prediction. Gen. xlix: 9. That which creates and generates is the Creator and Father of that which is created and generated. Jesus Christ, in the above quotations, is assumed to be the root of David, and the root of Jesse, David’s father. Does not this prove that he existed anterior to them ? that he was their creator, and the author of their spiritual existence ? The root gives life and existence to the tree ; and the tree is the offspring of the root. It was thus with Christ and David. Christ gave him natural and spiritual existence ; and this reconciles the paradox with which the Saviour perplexed the captious Jews concerning David’s Lord and David’s son. “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord ? saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son ?” Those to whom these questions were propounded being unitarians, saw they could not answer them in accordance with their hypothesis, and were silent. “No man was able to answer him a word.” They were *silenced* but not *convinced*. It makes plain, also, the language of the Son of God which was so offensive to unitarian Jews. “Before Abraham was, I am.”

It is but natural to enquire how those who assume that Jesus Christ was a mere man with superior delegated powers, sent into the world merely to set a good example, and teach good doctrines, by which men should be saved, and died the death only of a distinguished martyr to seal his doctrine, can reconcile these scriptures with their hypothesis upon the principles of common sense? Can a delegated being create? Can he give natural and spiritual life? A created being cannot create. A delegated being cannot exceed the powers conferred. All that he is, he is a debtor to God for; all his performances are limited by the will of his Creator. No being in heaven or on earth has pretended to create but God; and no being can give spiritual life but God; then he who was the root of Jesse and David, was "God manifested in the flesh."

2. Literal declarations of Holy Writ, plainly set forth the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."—Isa. ix: 6. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."—Isa. vii: 14. The child born is the eternal word developed by flesh; the son given is the everlasting Father, manifested to the world in the person of the son of Mary. He is called Wonderful, because of the mysterious union of his divine and human nature. Counsellor, for he was with the Father in counsel in eternity. He is the mighty God, or God, the mighty One. Everlasting Father, or the Father of eternity. Prince of Peace; as king of saints, he commands, creates and restores peace. Surely upon no created intelligence, however richly endowed, could such titles be lavished by the Spirit of God. The ideas, too, are as overwhelming as their titles; both ideas and titles setting him forth to the world as "God over all blessed forever more."

But the mystery of the virgin's conception is much in point. To this we have the testimony of an Old and New Testament writer. Matthew quotes Isaiah, and gives the meaning of the term *Immanuel*. As a Jew, and writing to and for the benefit of the Jews, he knew the idea the nation attached to that name, and gives it in this expres-

sive, and literal language : "And they shall call his name Immanuel ; which being interpreted, is, God with us." How, unless he is "God with us," can he be *Jesus* a *Saviour*? If Immanuel was only the first and greatest, and the most eminently endowed created intelligence, he could only by his obedience to his Creator, secure his own peace and everlasting happiness. As a *creature*, all his obedience was due his Creator ; and after having done all, he could but acknowledge himself an unprofitable servant. He could not, however, be the "saviour of all men," but merely the saviour of himself. A depraved and guilty world needs a God-man saviour, such a one as Immanuel God.

The apostle John seems to have written more plainly on this subject, than any of the sacred writers. For this but one reason will be given : he wrote for the instruction and edification of "little children." We are not astonished then, at his writing so plainly on the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ. And we are truly astonished, that a subject reduced to the capacity of "little children," cannot be understood by men. But it is to be remembered, that "the wise and prudent" cannot understand, except they are converted and become as little children. I will withhold his elaborate exposition no longer. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him, was not any thing made that was made. In him was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us." We cannot but admire this beautiful climax. All things were created by the word, that word was God ; the life and light of men ; and that word was made flesh, became Jesus and dwelt among, and spoke to men the words of eternal life. A Sabbath school scholar who had never heard of Arianism, unitarianism, &c., would, after reading these passages, be astonished that the eternal existence of the word had ever been controverted ; and that it had ever been doubted that this eternal word was Jesus of Nazareth. The Jews understood this language ; they were taught in their synagogues, that the word of God * was the

* Josephus in his discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades, may be regarded as speaking the language of the whole nation on this subject. He says : "All men, the just as well as the unjust, shall be brought before God the Word : for to him hath the Father com-

same as God ; and that the creation of all things was by the word of God. While they believed this, they denied him, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst them. And do not those who reject his claims to divinity, deny him to the jeopardizing of their own souls? If he was but a man, though strangely and powerfully endowed with gifts and graces, he cannot save them. He might "save himself but others he cannot save." There being "salvation in no other," if he does not save them they are undone; and if he is not the eternal "word made flesh" this he cannot do, so their souls are "in jeopardy every hour."

3. The same perfections are, in the sacred writings, ascribed to Jesus Christ as are ascribed to Jehovah. A good man may, to a limited extent, possess the moral attributes of God, mercy, justice, goodness, holiness, wisdom, &c.; but his natural perfections, infinity, independence, immutability, immortality and eternity, no finite creature can possess. To one Being alone belong these attributes, and that Being is Jehovah. Now if it can be proved that Jesus Christ possesses them, the conclusion is inevitable that he is God.

1. His eternity. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."—Micah v: 2. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way. I was set up from everlasting."—Prov. viii: 22, 23. "The everlasting Father."—Isa. ix: 6. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—Col. i: 17. If there is any meaning in language, and strength in ideas, these quotations prove the eternity of the Son of God. If Jesus Christ is eternal, how could he be delegated to perform a specific work? For him to be delegated, there must have existed anteriorly a superior power to send him on his mission. But as he was eternal himself, who gave him delegated authority? While Unitarians are answering this question, I will notice,

2. His immutability. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."—Heb. xiii: 8. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the

mitted all judgment; and he in order to fulfil the will of of his Father shall come as Judge, whom we call Christ. For Minas and Rhodamantus are not the judges, as you Greeks suppose, but he whom God and the Father hath glorified."

earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest: and they shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”—Heb. i: 10, 11, 12. Here creation, sustentation and immutability, are ascribed to the Son of God. Such a work as creation, and such omnipotent power as is necessary to uphold all things, cannot be attributed to a creature; and immutability has never been predicated of any being but God; but Jesus Christ having done all this, and being the “same yesterday, to-day and forever,” the “fullness of the Godhead must dwell bodily in him.”

The perfections of eternity and immutability have been introduced and descanted upon for the sake of illustration; and that part of the subject will be dismissed by remarking that what is, and can be proved of them, can as easily be proven of all the rest. There is no perfection predicated of Jehovah in the scriptures, but what is equally predicated of his Son Jesus Christ. This argument of itself ought to stop the mouth of gainsayers. There cannot be two infinite, eternal, independent, immutable, immortal, omnipresent and omnipotent Gods. Then as the Father and the Son possess these incommunicable attributes, it must be true as the Son of Man declared, “I and my Father are one.” I will not discuss this sublime mystery, because I do not understand it. Until all other mysteries by which I am surrounded are cleared up, I will not approach the secret chamber of the Eternal Divinity and peremptorily demand the removal of the “clouds and darkness,” the curtains of the imperial Majesty of heaven. Had men the humility, awe and reverence of Moses before the burning bush, a symbol only of the Divine Being, when they approach this awfully grand subject to investigate it, there would not be so many flat denials of a Triune Divinity.

4. The salvation of sinners is the work of God. This proposition will not be denied by the veriest Arian. It is equally true, however, that salvation is the work of Jesus Christ. The apostolic motto was, “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” The apostles, then, regarded salvation from sin to be the work of the Father and the Son, and in that great matter they were

“one.” How derogatory to the glory of God, and how idolatrous to ascribe salvation from sin to a creature however exalted! To believe that a created intelligence could make an atonement for sin of sufficient dignity in public estimation; of sufficient virtue and vicariousness to satisfy the public justice of God, and to justify and save a sinner, is to strain credulity to the utmost. But for God, the Word, to become incarnate and to offer himself, “without spot,” as a sacrifice for sin, it is reasonable to expect salvation to follow as a consequence.

5. Forgiveness of sin is the work of God. This also will not be denied even by a low Socinian. But is it not equally plain from the word of God, that forgiveness of sin is likewise the work of the Son of God? The Jews so understand it; and when Messiah proclaimed the sins of men forgiven in their presence, they regarded such declarations as blasphemous, and uttered a truth “that none can forgive sins but God.” They were correct in their conclusion, but were mistaken in the personage before them. They were low Arians, and looked upon Christ as a man extraordinarily endowed, but denied his claims to divinity. True, none could forgive sins but God; but God was then before them veiled in flesh as the “root and the offspring of David.” The Jews were more consistent theologians than modern Unitarians. Had they believed that he was the Son of God, they would have had no difficulty in acknowledging his divinity. Unitarians say he is the Son of God, but explain away his divine nature. Nothing can be conceived as more absurd than for an angel from heaven, or a man on earth, to pretend to forgive sins. Those who make such pretensions are pitied by the citizens of heaven, and are the butt and ridicule of the well instructed on earth. It is assuming the prerogative of Deity; and if Jesus Christ were the most exalted of angelic beings, and were to attempt it, for intruding upon the work of God, he would be hurled out of heaven as a rebellious Lucifer. But as he performed that work while on earth, and now performs it in heaven, it is evident he must be the Lord Jehovah.

6. Divine worship was commanded, and was performed to the Son of God. Divine homage was to be paid him by the angels in heaven at his coronation. When the triumphant conqueror entered the heaven of heavens amid the

shouts and acclamations of the holy attendants and entered the "courts of his holiness," one sentence of the Father's inaugural speech was thus: "And let all the angels of God worship him." They neither refused to obey the command, nor denied the divinity; but all willingly "crowned him Lord of all." There were no Unitarians then in that angelic multitude of worshipers, at the feet of him who had traveled in the greatness of his own strength through this world and was "mighty to save." He was their Creator, and they could not but do him reverence. He had emptied himself of his former glory, and had now resumed it, and they greeted him with warm hearts to his final resting place, "upon his holy hill of Zion." Men on earth have been, and may be guilty of idolatry; but it cannot be assumed of the angels in heaven. Had not Jesus Christ been equal with the Father, the angels would have been guilty of gross idolatry; and Jehovah would himself have set up in heaven—a competitor—a Baal in his own dominions. My soul, then, fear not the charge of idolatry; have no fears of worshiping a creature when thou fallest down with angels before the glorified Lord Jesus. Look up and confidently expect the remission of thy sins through his divine blood. Thy sins are great, and none but a God can forgive them; but Jesus has "all power in heaven and in earth," and can remit them for his own righteousness' sake.

The Lord Jesus was worshiped by the church on earth as well as by the angels in heaven. Socinians say, and have no higher regard for him, that Jesus was the son of Joseph. Miserable philosophers and theologians! If I am to inquire of men in what light to view Jesus of Nazareth, I will go to the first organized church after the descent of the Holy Spirit; and to the first Christians who were baptized by the Holy Spirit. At first they "had favor with all men," Saducees and Pharisees, and even the divinity school of Gamaliel said "let these men alone," till a report of their manner of worship was made to the authorities, and then they were persecuted by all sects and parties, political and religious. There must have been something in their mode of worship, peculiarly offensive to the religionists of that age, to have brought down upon their heads such misdirected indignation; and the attentive hearer naturally inquires, What was it? Saul of Tarsus disperses them from Jerusa-

lem for that offence, and pursues them with letters patent to Damascus. Deacon Stephen is killed for offending the dogmatic theology of that age, and the disciples were scattered abroad. I will keep you in suspense no longer; it was for what all sects of the Jews considered idolatry—for worshiping, as the Socinian would say, “the son of Joseph.” The head and front of their offence was, *they worshiped Messiah*, “the root and the offspring of David.” The Sadducees had borne with the disciples, though they insisted upon a resurrection from the dead, the existence of angels and spirits, because they did not appeal to the five books of Moses for proof, the only books which they received as canonical; the Pharisees tolerated them because they were with them on the doctrine of the resurrection, angelic and spiritual existence, future rewards and punishments, and did not offend in law; but as soon as it was ascertained that they called on the name of the Lord Jesus in their prayers, they became obnoxious to both sects, and were persecuted as idolators. I have been often struck with the pathetic appeal of Ananias to God when he was commanded to go to the house where Saul was praying, “Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and how he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.” When the disciples heard him preach, they were amazed, and said, “Is not this he that destroyed all them that called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?” From these and other passages which might be adduced, we learn that the great crime of which they were guilty, and for which they were so severely punished, *was calling on the name of the Lord Jesus*. This was the custom of the disciples of Christ, not only at Damascus, but also at Jerusalem, whence the “law went forth,” and where the “word of the Lord” was first published. To call on the name of the Lord Jesus, was an established law of apostolic worship, and the saints were bound to obey it.

The Jews had long suffered by, and were cured of, their idolatry and they were determined it should not again be set up in their midst. While we dislike the harsh measures they used in suppressing it, we are compelled to admire their zeal against a practice so God-dishonoring. But were the

disciples really idolators? If Jesus was merely "the son of Joseph" they were. If he was not "Lord of all," they were worshiping a creature and had violated that statute in the law which says, "thou shalt have no other gods before me." The mistake of the Jews lay in this: they regarded Jesus as an extraordinary man, but not the Messiah. The morality of their conduct can easily be decided; if Jesus was not *the Christ*, they did right in attempting to suppress the idolatry of his deluded disciples; but if he was, as Peter confessed, "the Son of the living God," they were at war with the true worship of Jehovah. But the mistake of the Unitarians is more inconsistent and fatal; they own him in part, and deny him in part; they kiss his humanity, and deny his divinity.

The disciples had good reasons for calling on the name of Jesus. On the night of the last supper the Apostles were greatly disturbed at the idea of their Lord leaving them; and to comfort their hearts he promises them, that when he was in heaven glorified, "whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." And further, "if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." With such assurances, and such a commandment, it was natural, yea, it was right for them to invoke his name. If there was idolatry in the whole premises, the Lord Jehovah established it; and no one can believe a proposition so glowingly preposterous. But for this practice they suffered the last resort of religious bigotry, persecution; and for the same practice Trinitarians are pelted with the weapons of Arians, Unitarians and Socinians. Well, their metaphysical missiles may fall as thick around us and pelt us as did the stones of Stephen's persecutors, and we, like him, will invoke his name through life, and in death exclaim, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and fall asleep in the arms of a God clothed in humanity.

7. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is a condition of salvation. All men are commanded to exercise it, at the peril of their salvation; and to exercise it, secures eternal life to the soul. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Shall our faith enter within the veil" and "lay hold" upon a mere creature, an exalted martyr? Can we anchor our hope upon such a foundation? Nay, verily. But as salvation follows faith in God, and faith in his Son, we conclude they are the same in unity, and that the sacred writers were not such hair splitting metaphysicians as to distinguish between them. It is but reasonable to insist, that, to expect salvation to come through a being inferior to God,* is the perfection of absurdity; and yet Unitarians teach that Jesus is inferior to God the Father, while the scriptures teach that eternal life comes to the soul through faith in him. I leave them to reconcile this paradox.

8. The Scriptures teach that Christ is the life of the Christian. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "I am the resurrection and the life." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." How can a creature, "the son of Joseph," impart life, and live in the heart of every believer? Such a being must be limited necessarily in his presence, yet he is said to live in, and to be "the life" of every believer in every part of Jehovah's commonwealth. A Socinian's Christ being only "the son of Joseph," has no life to impart to a lifeless soul; no vital energy to infuse into the morally dead of this world; no breath to breathe upon the "dry bones" of this revolted province of God's moral government; but a solitary looker-on at the bestowment of life by the "one God." But the Trinitarian believer looks up to him as the fountain of life; feels that all the life he has is derived from Christ, and exclaims triumphantly, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." How Christ is the life of every

* Imperfect views of human depravity, cause teachers to insist upon an imperfect remedy. A slight wound, they think, is easily cured; and hence the prophet exclaims, "they have healed the daughter of my people slightly." Teachers who deny the Divinity of Jesus, apologise for depravity, and think it a mere misfortune. For this we must concede to them consistency. For if sin is as light a matter in God's moral government, as they contend, the humanity of Jesus alone may answer as a remedy. But if sin and depravity is that for which Trinitarians contend, nothing short of humanity and Divinity united, will answer as a remedy for such moral corruption.

Christian, cannot be explained upon the Unitarian hypothesis. An isolated, finite creature cannot be with all the saints, in all ages and in all parts of the world, dwelling in their hearts, controlling their thoughts and affections; for, having no life but his own, and that being derived from his Creator, he cannot, and does not impart it to others. But, upon the Trinitarian hypothesis, the difficulty is easily reconciled. Allow him to be Jehovah incarnate, he is omnipresent, the life and light of the world, and can dwell in every believing heart by his Spirit's influence, giving them life, light and salvation. How rational this to an unprejudiced mind!

The atonement of Jesus Christ is the ground upon which God pardons sin. In Unitarian theology, the atonement of Jesus has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sin. Say they, "we object strongly to the views frequently expressed, of the connection of the death of Christ with the forgiveness of sin." This sentiment is perfectly consistent with their views of the Son of God. To respect him only as "God's constituted teacher;" and so regard his death as that only of a distinguished martyr, of course sets aside his vicarious sacrifice upon the cross. If my views of the death of Christ were no more exalted than this, the death of Paul and Peter upon the cross, would be, to my mind, as sacrificial an offering for sin, and as vicarious in its nature as that of the "son of Joseph." Paul and Peter were "constituted teachers of God" as well as Christ, and their death, upon the hypothesis that Jesus was not divine, would be as vicarious as his. I freely concede to them consistency in this matter. But they err by denying that the sacrifice offered on the cross was by the eternal "word made flesh;" by the "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Beginning and the Ending." If their faith run thus, they could not so "strongly object to the views so frequently expressed, of the connection of the death of Christ with the forgiveness of sin."

If then, the sacrificial offering of Christ, on the cross, is to be the ground upon which God pardons sin, what is there in Unitarian theology to reform, dignify, save and glorify depraved and debased mankind? It would be as difficult to find the head quarters of the wind, as to find any thing in heaven or upon earth which could resuscitate, sanctify and

prepare for heaven. Take away the atonement of the holy Jesus and his righteousness,* from a Christian, and he exclaims in the pathetic language of Mary at the sepulchre. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." I charge Arians, Semi-Arians, Socinians and Unitarians with a sacrilegious effort to take away our Lord, the only hope of salvation for a dying world. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." "But now once in the end of the world hath He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Let the above quotations suffice as a sample of hundreds which might be adduced to prove that forgiveness of sin, is connected with the death of Christ; and that on account of it, God pardons the sins of believing penitent sinners.

II. The human nature of Christ. There have been those in the world, who denied the human nature of Christ. Marcion and his followers held the birth, incarnation, and passion of Jesus Christ to be only apparent, and not real. With such "filthy dreamers" we will have nothing to do in this investigation; but deliver them over to the apostle John, and let him pass sentence on them. He says: "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come." The living oracles furnish us abundant evidence of the real humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a son of Mary, who was a legitimate descendant of David; and his human genealogy can be traced from David to Abraham, and from Abraham to Adam. He is declared to be a "rod from the stem of Jesse," David's father; and also the "offspring of David." "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and

* The holy law of God requires a perfect righteousness. But to this requirement, sinful and depraved mankind respond in the language of the prophet, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags." If we are thus destitute, how shall we escape when we appear before God to be judged by his holy law? If we have no righteousness, we must appear before God in the righteousness of another. Here Christ comes to our relief, who is the "Lord our righteousness;" and "who of God is made unto us righteousness. His righteousness is perfect; so perfect that the searching eye of a jealous God can find no defect in it. The law holds no demands upon Christ nor believers, for he has satisfied it for them; his righteousness is made theirs in law, and hence they will be acquitted in the judgment for Christ's sake. If this is true, I see no hope for those who reject the divinity of Christ.

blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." As the humanity of Christ is not now a subject of controversy, the above passages may suffice in proof of that doctrine; with the additional remark that, as a man, he ate, drank, slept, hungered, was weary, sorrowed, rejoiced, wept, was tempted, and performed all the duties of a good citizen of state and of a rational man.

Though Jesus was human nature in soul and body, yet he was holy, harmless and undefiled, and so far as personal sins were concerned, he was "separate." The word that was made flesh, was holy, and the body was holy. Said the angel to Mary, "that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." He was naturally holy, and "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings;" to magnify a holy law and make it honorable. Depraved man could not keep the law of God; he was already under its curse, and could not obtain salvation by it. But a holy Jesus who was above law, condescended to come under law, to redeem them that were under the law. By such a condescension on the part of the immaculate Lawgiver, and by such an active obedience to the precepts of that holy law which man had violated, and by dying in the place of man, he has opened the way for an honorable exercise of mercy to a rebellious world. This, man could never do for himself. To have offered himself a sacrifice, or the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, would have been an abomination to God. And all the acts of obedience which the most perfect man could have rendered, could not remove the curse of the law, nor satisfy its rigorous claims upon him. But the holy Jesus, the Son of the offended Father, rendered satisfaction to his violated law, satisfied public justice, "condemned sin in the flesh," and became the constituted medium through which believers are justified, sanctified and glorified. The Father was well pleased

with the work of his righteous Son, and has constituted him "Lord of all."

Take this view of the person, advent and sacrificial offering of Jesus, and dignity, honor and glory, attach to, and cluster around the work of redemption. But the Unitarian and Socinian view of it degrades the Redeemer and his official work from the lofty claims which the scriptures concede to him, to that of a "constituted teacher sent from God;" and his sacrifice to that of a good man, and a distinguished martyr. In view of such sentiments, the Christian who feels his unworthiness and the remains of depravity, naturally asks, "Where is the Lord Jehovah my righteousness? I have none of my own. All my righteousness is as filthy rags. Wo is me, for I am undone. My iniquities have gone over me. I need his merits and his justifying righteousness. If he was not God-man, he has none to spare, and I must perish."

Never fear, child of immortality, rest your soul upon "God manifested in the flesh;" look up with unshaken confidence to the glorified Messiah, "who being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Think of that sweet expression, "*by himself purged our sins*;" implying divinity and humanity in the sacrifice. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet;" to intercede for you. He has found a glorious resting place on his "holy hill of Zion." The Father hath proclaimed the eternal decree, "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Let Humanitarians speculate as to his paternity, stumble at his birth and incarnation, reject his atonement and divinity, but do thou like the inhabitants of heaven, who know his worth, bow before him, and borrow the truthful and expressive language of seraphic tongues above, and say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."—Amen!

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FASHIONABLE AMUSEMENTS:

A Sermon by Rev. J. B. JETER, D. D., St. Louis, Mo., preached to his own people on Lord's day, in the Autumn of 1850.

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“*She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*”—1 Tim., v: 6.
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As the season of frivolity, amusements and dissipation has commenced—a season fraught with embarrassment and danger to many professing Christians—I deem it my duty to raise my warning voice against the seductions to pleasure, by which so many have been, and are still likely to be, fascinated, deceived and ruined. While some run to the extreme of *asceticism*, presenting Christianity in a gloomy and repulsive aspect, and others to the extreme of *libertinism*, exhibiting religion without purity or power, our safety, brethren and hearers, lies in following, with fidelity and diligence, the teachings of the scriptures. “Thy word,” said the inspired bard, “is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

It is not my design to enter on an exegesis of the context—that task I leave to commentators and critics—it is sufficient for my purpose to observe that the apostle cautions Timothy against pleasure loving widows: “*She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*” Though this language was spoken particularly of widows, it is clearly applicable to all, of both sexes, and of every condition, who are inordinately devoted to pleasure. There is no conceivable reason that the love and pursuit of pleasure should be more injurious to widows than to any other class of human beings. *A life of pleasure and its consequence form the subject of our discourse.*

I. *A life of pleasure*—This is the first topic demanding our consideration. What is it to *live in pleasure*? The fearful termination of such a life should lead us to examine this question, on our knees, with intense interest, and unwinking candor. To the inquiry, I reply,

First—It is not a temperate indulgence in innocent amusements. We are placed in a world which God has bountifully furnished for our enjoyment. Our appetites are gratified with the deliciousness and variety of the food and drink spontaneously afforded us, or which we may easily obtain by industry, skill and care; our ears are charmed by the sweet sounds of melody and concord; our eyes are delighted with the endless variety of beauty and grandeur which fills earth and heaven; and, in addition to all these pleasures, our social relations, our pursuit of knowledge, and our various avocations, open to us innumerable sources of enjoyment. Now, piety surely is not incompatible with a grateful and joyous participation of the multiplied blessings with which a beneficent Providence surrounds us. It is superstition, not piety, which has driven men from society, to seek in solitude and inactivity, and by self inflicted and painful austerities, a fervor of devotion, and a perfection of character, unattainable amid the ordinary duties and enjoyments of life. Religion is designed to make us better members of society, and not to separate us from its duties and pleasures, and make us worthless drones in the great human hive. Austerity is not holiness—penance is not repentance—an emaciated and rag covered body may conceal a heart proud, bigoted and revengeful. God does not interdict, but require the temperate, grateful enjoyment of his bounties. “There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor.” The wise man refers in this passage to earthly good: to teach otherwise is contrary to the whole tenor of revelation, and the solemn injunction of Christ, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” That some indulgences are allowable, all, except the most confirmed religious dyspeptics, will agree; but to draw a line of demarcation between innocent and guilty pleasures is no easy task. There is, in many amusements, such a gradual shading from right to wrong, that the most profound casuists find it difficult to determine where right ends and wrong begins. We may easily and

certainly decide concerning one extreme that it is right, and concerning the other that it is wrong ; but between these often lies a disputed territory, in which conscience and inclination may maintain fierce, painful and uncertain conflicts. Now, it is in regard to this very territory that we feel the need of an umpire to end the strife, free conscience from the encroachments of lust and passion, and secure to man the harmless enjoyment of divine blessings.

Some principles, brethren and hearers, I will endeavor to lay down to guide you in the selection of innocent amusements. "I speak as unto wise men : judge ye what I say."

1. Pleasures, to be innocent, must be such as are not *interdicted* in the scriptures. Sin has its pleasures. To deny it were to contradict the experience of every sinner. Intemperance has its gratification of the appetite, its exhilaration of the spirits, its conviviality and its revelry. Debauchery has its gross and momentary pleasures. Revenge, to a proud, selfish and malignant heart, is sweet. Even profanity, the most unprovoked and barren of all sins, yields to impious minds the delight of conscious freedom from all religious restraints. But I need not farther particularize—every sin is committed with the promise and expectation of present or prospective enjoyment. "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But all the pleasures of sin are forbidden, guilty and ruinous ; and those who enjoy them do so with their eyes open, in defiance of God, and at the peril of their souls.

2. Innocent pleasures are such as are not *injurious to health*. Health is the most valuable of earthly blessings ; and on its enjoyment depends the fulfillment of most of our obligations, as well as our usefulness in this life. Its preservation is, therefore, an imperative and sacred duty, not, indeed, specially commanded, but clearly implied in every precept of revelation. For if we are bound to employ our powers for the good of our fellow-men, and the glory of God, we are equally bound to preserve these powers, so far as it may be done by temperance and discretion, in their full vigor and activity. To serve God with bodily and mental powers, wantonly wicked and enfeebled by a devotion to pleasure, is to offer the blind, the lame and the sick in sacrifice. Amusements, then, which imperil health are not innocent. Pleasure parties, which assemble at a late hour, extend through

the greater part of the night, and involve the loss of sleep, exposures from heated rooms to unwholesome night air, and the derangement of the steady and invigorating habits of life, are fraught with danger to health. A vigorous constitution, and counteracting sanitary means, may for a season conceal the ravages of frequent attendance at such parties, but the laws of health cannot be violated with impunity. Soon the pallid cheek, the shattered nervous system, and the fastidious appetite, will tell the tale of neglect and excess. To social intercourse I have no objection, if it be regulated by courtesy, kindness and purity. Nay, I deem it an evil in Western, and indeed, in American society, that amid the din of business, and the whirl of exciting public amusements, free, kind and joyous social intercourse is too much neglected. The glare of large and expensive parties, and the excitement of public exhibitions, are substituted for the purer and nobler pleasures of the intellect and the heart. I must then enter my solemn protest against late and long continued night assemblages. They are a war, not only on health, but on the well ordered habits of society, and the dictates of common sense, to omit all reference to the demands of piety. If an inspired apostle would not class these nocturnal amusements among the "works of the flesh," I am at a loss to conceive in what category he would place them.

3. Pleasures, to be innocent, must not be attended with *dangerous temptation to sin*. The Saviour has taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." This prayer clearly implies our obligation to avoid all needless exposure to temptation. Every occupation, enjoyment and relation of life has its peculiar incitements to evil; and, these, so far as they are inevitable, in the station to which Providence has assigned us, must be met, resisted and vanquished, by the grace of God; but it is at our peril if we expose ourselves wantonly to strong and dangerous temptations. No man who voluntarily, and with his eyes open, embarks in amusements, fraught with peculiar temptations to vice, can pray, without inocking his Maker, "Lead me not into temptation." He courts temptation, has no desire to be delivered from it, and his prayer is hypocrisy. On this principle, card-playing, and visiting drinking houses, theatres and circuses should be carefully avoided. These things may not be in themselves, and of necessity evil; but they are accompanied by perilous

seductions to sin, and fraught with fearful mischief to society. Playing cards for recreation seems to be harmless; but, in many instances, it begets and nourishes a fondness for gaming, which ends in dissipation, infamy and ruin. Drinking houses are hot beds of drunkenness and vice. The young man, who visits them of choice, should understand that he has entered on the high-road to destruction; and that, if grace, or some interposition of Providence, prevent not, he is destined to fill a drunkard's grave. If forced there on business, he should transact it speedily, and make his escape as from a lazaretto, infected with the plague. Against dramatic exhibitions, as such, I have nothing to say; but theatres, as they are almost universally conducted, are schools of vice. Many of the popular plays are corrupt and corrupting—the actors, with few exceptions, are, by common consent, placed beyond the pale of refined and virtuous society—drinking houses, gambling establishments, and brothels, spring up spontaneously around theatres, as in a congenial soil—and thousands of youth are trained in our populous cities, by attending them, for a career of crime and mischief. Of the circus, I need only say, that it is an amusement provided for those who do not like the intellectual seasoning of theatrical entertainments, or are too poor to pay for its enjoyment. Not only should Christians, but all men friendly to sound morality, not to say religion, abstain from these indulgences and amusements, and place themselves in direct and open hostility to them.

4. Innocent pleasures are such as do not *interfere with the duties of life*. “To every thing,” says Solomon, “there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.” In heaven's order, duties are before pleasures. Amusements harmless and commendable in themselves, are sinful, when followed to the neglect of duties. Pleasures, enjoyed in violation of parental authority, are evil. “Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” Let the child assuredly know that if he participates in any pleasure, forbidden by parental authority, though that prohibition may have originated in perverted views, or in mere caprice, he offends God, and forfeits the promised blessing. Amusements secured by expenditures which should be appropriated to the payment of debts

are condemned not only of God, but by all honest men. Pleasures, proper in themselves, are surely interdicted to those who must enjoy them at the reluctant expense of their defrauded creditors. Amusements enjoyed in seasons due to labor, or nursing the sick, or works of charity, are enjoyed at the expense of duty and a good conscience. The truth is, man was formed for higher and noble purposes than mere amusement. The most important interests are committed to his hands, the most weighty responsibilities are laid upon him, and he is animated in his toils by the prospect of a most glorious reward; and if to lighten his cares, and inspirit him for renewed labors and conflicts, he partakes of lawful recreations and pleasures, he acts wisely; but if pleasure usurps the place of duty, and momentary indulgences are preferred to enduring good, then Heaven's order is perverted, the end is sacrificed for the means, and that which is in itself harmless becomes a snare and a curse.

5. Pleasures which bring *reproach on the cause of Christ* are not innocent. No argument is needed to convince those who love Christ of the soundness of this principle. They have received too many invaluable favors at his hands, favors purchased with his own precious blood, to question the propriety of abstaining from every indulgence, by which His cause may be reproached, and His name blasphemed. Acting on this principle, they will avoid many things, which in themselves lawful, are deemed sinful, or of doubtful propriety, by others, or which, being misconstrued, are likely to seduce others into sin. This principle the apostle Paul inculcated in his ministry, and exemplified in his life. "Let not then your good," said he to the Roman saints, "be evil spoken of." That is, do not so use your liberty to eat meats, by some persons deemed unclean, as to bring reproach on your good profession. "Whatsoever things are—of good report—think on these things." Things approved and commended among men, are worthy of serious, careful consideration, and should, if they involve no sacrifice of principle, be adopted by Christians. "Wherefore," this was the apostle's disinterested, noble resolution, "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." He ate meat, had no question of the lawfulness of doing it, under certain circumstances; but so zealous was he to secure his brother from

guilt, and his Master's name from reproach, that he would cheerfully forego the advantage of using this kind of diet, rather than a weak brother should be seduced, by his example, to defile his conscience in eating meat offered to idols. On this principle, dancing, as an amusement, is inhibited. Whether it is in itself right, Christian casuists are not agreed. It must be conceded, however, that the weight of authority in Protestant Christendom is decidedly opposed to the amusement. The wisdom, piety and influence of those Christians who advocate, bear no favorable comparison with those of the Christians who condemn, the practice. Many worldly persons, who love the amusement, deem it wholly incompatible with the sanctity and obligations of the Christian profession. No Christian who duly prizes his character, influence and usefulness, and is awake to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom and the honor of his name, will indulge in an amusement, condemned by the good, at least, of questionable propriety, frivolous, fascinating, and ensnaring, and never, so far as I know, found in connection with sincere and consistent piety.

Secondly. It is not necessarily a life of profligacy, or gross vice. The devotee of pleasure may be dissolute or immoral; and it must be conceded that an inordinate love of pleasures frequently leads to vice, the most odious and revolting, and finally to ruin; but it does not of necessity do so. Far from it—the man of pleasure may be of the most amiable dispositions, the most honorable principles, the most correct moral deportment, a professor of Christianity, and a member of an orthodox and spiritual church. The widows against whom Paul cautioned Timothy, in our text, were church members. Had they not been the caution would not have been pertinent to his design. In selecting widows to share in the charitable contributions of the churches, or, according to some commentators, to give instruction to the young, such as were devoted to pleasure should be rejected. In his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle says, “Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping,” so deeply was the good man's heart affected by their conduct, “whose god is their belly”—they were sensualists, sacrificing their time, property and health, with idolatrous devotion, to the gratification of their appetites—“who mind earthly things”—they were worldlings, giving their

supreme affections to earthly things, and seeking their supreme happiness from them. In looking, then, for the devotees of pleasure we need not confine our search to that class called the world ; but often within the pale of the best instructed, and most pious and efficient churches, we may find the most perfect slaves to pleasures, restrained, indeed, by the dread of church censure, from some excesses, but as frivolous in spirit, and as eager to participate in every carnal amusement, as the most determined worldling. It is a great pity that so it should be.

Thirdly. It is to be supremely devoted to pleasure, or, as the apostle explains it, to be "*lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*" The text has, probably, particular reference to sensuality, or luxurious living ; but all pleasures, however innocent and proper in themselves, if allowed to engross our affections, allure us from the path of duty, and unfit us for the worship of God, will produce the same fearful result. They live in pleasure who prefer it to "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." These are an enduring portion, worthy of their intense desire and eager pursuit ; but if to these they prefer the momentary, unsubstantial, deceptive, corrupting pleasures of the world, then pleasure is the element in which they live. They live in pleasure who in its mirth and revelry, and insatiation, hear not the voice of duty, of conscience and of God. They live in pleasure who live without prayer and communion with God.

This supreme devotion to pleasure shows itself in a variety of ways. Behold it, in the love of display—in gay and fashionable attire—in costly and shining equipage—and in sumptuous and richly furnished palaces. See it in the eager and ceaseless pursuit of amusements—the constant attendance on soirees, and parties, and balls, and masquerades, and concerts, and theatres, and circuses, and shows. Mark it, in the giddy and unending whirl of dissipations—dissipations of time, of money, of thought, and of health. Contemplate it, in the luxuries, which wealth promises, art prepares and excess abuses. And, above all, brethren and hearers, behold it, with amazement and grief, in the neglect of all serious attention to the interests of the soul and eternity—the Bible unread—the sanctuary neglected—the Sabbath desecrated—the commandments of God made void—the Saviour despised and rejected of men, and the name of

God blasphemed. Multitudes worship no god but pleasure, acknowledge no authority but self, obey no law but inclination, and seek no good but amusements.

II. *The result of a life of pleasure*—this is the second general subject of our discourse—"She that liveth in pleasure is dead."

The devotee of pleasure, I hardly need say, is not *literally* dead : in this sense "she liveth." She may possess all the symptoms of life, health and vigor. Her eyes may sparkle with vivacity ; her cheeks may glow with the roseate hue of youth ; her full, free heart may send the tide of life, bounding with joy, through all her arteries, imparting vigor and activity to every member, and every muscle ; her voice may be melody and her motions grace ; and a sound constitution and uninterrupted health may promise her a long, bright and blissful life ; but *she is dead*. Her living body is the sepulchre of her dead soul. Her better, her spiritual, her immortal part is shrouded, confined and putrifying.

Not that she is *inactive* : Her powers are all eagerly and vigorously employed in the pursuit of pleasurable indulgences. The latest fashions, the last great and splendid party, the coming masquerade, the unrivalled drama, the crowd of admirers and flatterers, engross all the thoughts and affections of her heart, are the charming topics of every conversation, banish God and heaven from her mind, and quiet the murmurs of a disturbed conscience.

Not that she is *insensible*. She is quite alive to all the gay dreams of bliss, and all the schemes of securing pleasure. Most deeply does she feel the disappointment of attending the gay festival, the superior success of a rival, or the neglect of a supposed admirer. Intensely does she relish the amusements and gratifications, so ingeniously devised by art, and so copiously furnished for gain. Insensible, indeed ! Her soul is the seat of the most fervent, fierce and conflicting emotions. It is bloated with pride, goaded by ambition, stung by resentment, sickened by envy, inflamed by hatred, and consumed by *ennui*. It is "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

But she is dead to *duty*. She was made an intelligent, moral agent, bearing the stamp of immortality. She was placed on earth, amid various relations, for purposes high as heaven and vast as eternity. She has a soul to save, a

heaven to secure, a God to glorify ; and for the accomplishment of these purposes, she is called to incessant watchfulness, prayer, self-denial, obedience and devotion. It is a solemn thing to die, but a more solemn thing to live. But the most imperative obligations, and the most important duties are all forgotten, or neglected, in the giddy whirl, or anxious pursuit of pleasure. The spirit of prayer is not congenial with the festivities and excitements of a ball-room. Piety, disgusted and grieved, takes her departure from the profanities, obscenities and corruptions of the theatre. Repentance can have no place in a heart, in which the love of pleasure, in its most innocent form, is predominant.

She is dead to all *true enjoyment*. Religion yields the only real happiness known on earth. To her sincere votaries she opens unfailing fountains of the purest and sweetest delights. A quiet conscience, strong confidence in God, a hope of heaven, consolation in truth, deliverance from the fear of death—these, Religion, are thy priceless gifts. These are blessings worthy of the desire and pursuit of an immortal spirit, and worthy to be the gifts of a God of love to his obedient children. But for these pure and rational delights, the devotee of pleasure has neither time nor taste. Christians are welcome to their Bibles, their Sabbaths, their hopes, their communion one with another, their joys, and their heavens, if she may but have her mirth and revelry. She aspires after no higher pleasure than that which may be obtained from the sparkling bowl, the giddy dance, and the brilliant entertainment.

She is dead to the *church*. How could she be otherwise ? If she is a member of the church at all, she is a fruitless, heartless one ; having a name to live and is dead. From the church she derives no profit. Her ministrations may be faithful and impressive, her ordinances scriptural and sanctifying, her devotions sincere and spiritual, her discipline affectionate and firm, and many, through her kindly influence, may be fitted for heaven ; but she—the slave of pleasure—derives neither instruction, comfort, nor well grounded hope, from her church connection. As she receives no profit from, so she imparts no good to, the church. Her prayers, if she prays at all, are mere mockery of God, an abomination in his sight—her example is a libel on Christianity and a reproach to the church—and her money, if not

all absorbed in display and luxurious living, is given grudgingly, or with ostentation, to the cause of Christ. Her body may be in the sanctuary, but her heart and thoughts are not there. The all-seeing God, in whose house she irreverently seats herself, sees that her mind, filled with the remembrances of past, or the anticipations of future pleasures, has no place for his word. Her pastor, deceived by her bodily presence, pleads, warns and expostulates, and finally hopes that she may be rescued from the vortex of ruin, but labors and hopes in vain.

She is dead to *heaven*. It is the metropolis of the universe—the palace of God—the abode of saints and angels—and the centre of bliss. Its society is the purest, most enlightened and most exalted—its employments are noble, without peril, and unceasing without fatigue—its delights are full, without satiety or excess—and its honors are enduring and fadeless. But all these are nought to her. She has neither title, nor meetness, nor desire for heaven. There Christ lives, reigns and distributes blessings. There angels, the first born sons of God, the nobles of the universe, adoring, wait before the throne, to fulfil his behests. There patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, with the innumerable company of the redeemed, arrayed in white, with palms in their hands, and freed from want, and pain and tears, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. It may be, oh, thou giddy devotee of pleasure, that thy father, or mother, or sister is of that bright and favored throng; but thou hast deliberately turned away from the joys and glories of heaven, and chosen thy portion on earth. Farewell Christ, and heaven, and sainted relatives—I give up all for pleasure. My soul shudders while I think of it. Not only hast thou turned thy back on heaven, but thou seemest intent to lock its gates against thine entrance, and pursue with rapid, undeviating, thoughtless steps the flowery road to perdition.

She is dead to *God*. Though she lives, and moves, and has her being in him; derives from him all her blessings; is amenable to him for all her thoughts, words and deeds; and must soon appear at his tribunal to render an account of her life; yet He is not in all her thoughts. Her affections are utterly estranged from him. She is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. She has no knowledge of God, and no

desire to become acquainted with Him. She unites with the wicked of old, in saying unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." She is without God in the world; or, if she has any god, that god is pleasure. This is the object of her supreme affection and unceasing devotion. To this she willingly sacrifices her time, money and health; and, if grace prevent not, will certainly sacrifice her happiness, her soul, her all.

She is *dead*—morally, spiritually dead—dead in the most fearful sense of the term. She is corrupt, loathed of God, fit only to be cast out, and buried, both soul and body, in hell. What a dreadful doom! A life of effeminacy, luxury and excess, ending in a lake of fire and brimstone—

"A scene of fancied bliss and heart-felt care
Closing, at last, in darkness and despair."

I will not dwell on this appalling subject. Need I remind you again, my dear hearers, that the doom, which I have feebly portrayed, is not restricted to widows, or females, or the young, or the rich, or the fashionable, but covers all, of every age, condition and character, and of both sexes, who prefer the pleasures of sense to the pleasures of piety; who for their happiness confide in creatures rather than the Creator. I fear some in this congregation, perhaps many, are subject to this frightful doom. These, who dance but pray not; who read fictions with an interest and diligence which they never bestow on the word of God; who attend to amusements as a business and religion as a recreation, or not at all; who are more concerned about the fashion of their garments than the dispositions of their hearts; who willingly give pounds for the gratification of their desires, but grudgingly give pence to feed the hungry, or promote the cause of Christ—tell me, my hearers, are they not living in pleasures, and dead while they are living? And surely it does not abate, one tittle of the guilt, and the danger, and the fearful consequences of a life of sin, that it is found within the precincts of a well ordered Christian church. Some sins fall under the observation, and incur the censure of the church, and subject their proprietors to discipline, and, without repentance, to exclusion from fellowship; but the inordinate love of pleasure, if restrained within certain conventional limits, finds toleration in the purest and best governed church. It is an insidious, undefinable and growing evil,

which seeks to keep on fair terms with religion, and to gain the approbation, at least, connivance of good men; but which every where, and under all circumstances, is the death of the soul, and, repentance preventing not, the precursor of eternal death.

In conclusion—

1. Let us sedulously guard against the *seductions* to a life of pleasure. Ten thousand perils beset the paths of the young and unwary. They are instinctively *fond of amusement*. This fondness is seen in every stage of life, from childhood to maturity, and frequently from maturity to old age. We may philosophize, inculcate a rigid self-denial, and maintain a strict discipline; but the young love pleasures, and pursue them by a law which neither education nor authority can repeal or evade. The guardians of children and youth should carefully provide for them innocent entertainments, and regulate their indulgence in them. But under the best instruction and discipline their fondness for amusements may become a snare to them. Unrestrained, it will hurry them into excesses, and finally into vice and ruin.

The *innocence of many amusements* is another cause of their danger. Were they sinful, they would be positively forbidden by parental authority, and scrupulously avoided; but they are in themselves harmless, and are, therefore, tolerated. But once indulged in, they may engross the affections, and banish from the mind all serious thought of religion; and insidiously pave the way to questionable indulgences, and finally to flagrant sins.

The *solicitations* of kind, but indiscreet friends is another source of temptation and danger to the young. If left to the guidance of parental affection, and the dictates of their own consciences, they would not be so readily seduced into a headlong career of pleasure; but there are never wanting those who, by their conversation, example and direct efforts, could allure them to scenes of festivity, excitement and temptation. They see no evil in these entertainments; they are fashionable; young persons should learn the ways of the world; and they generously proffer to accompany and initiate the inexperienced youth, and the proffer wins their hearts, and enflames their desire for the untasted bliss.

To these sources of temptation, we may add the blinding influence of *excitement*. How often on festival occasions

are young men hurried into excesses, by the impulse of excitement, from which they would shrink with horror, in their sober and reflecting moments. When the ardent, amiable young man is first carried home to his grieved parents in a fit of intoxication, from a fourth of July revel, he is amazed, so soon as returning reason will permit reflection, that he was so blinded and infatuated by excitement. Happy for him if he sees his danger and avoids it.

Without thoughtfulness and caution the ruin of the young, especially in cities, is inevitable. And permit me, my young friends, earnestly to recommend piety as the only safeguard from the seductions to pleasure. Possessing this, you will have pure, substantial bliss—learn to place a just estimate on earthly pleasures, and enjoy them in subservience to your duty, and your immortal interests—and, when flesh and heart shall fail, secure a participation in the “fulness of joy” in God’s presence, and the “pleasures evermore,” which are at his right hand.

2. The world reasonably expects that Christians, at least, will set an example of *self-denial and moderation*. Their profession demands this of them. They tell us, that having tried the world, and found it vain, unsatisfying and deceitful, they have renounced it. They proclaim that in Christ Jesus, they have found a peace which passeth understanding, and a joy unspeakable, and full of glory. In the most solemn, impressive and public manner, they have proposed to renounce the world, with its pomps and vanities, and to seek their happiness from a higher, purer source. The men of the world are slow to believe this profession, and are apt to look on it as mere cant, or downright hypocrisy. And if they are as eager as the most confirmed worldling to share in sensual pleasures, who can give them credit for sincerity? They are required not to exclude themselves from the world, but to perform an important part in its moral renovation—not to be monks, but to be self-denying, cross-bearing Christians. They should use the world as not abusing it. They may with glad and grateful hearts partake of the innocent recreations and pleasures of life; but they should seek, and evince that they seek, their chief enjoyment from God. Consistency, the salvation of sinners, and the honor of Christ, demand these things of them. The men of the world carefully watch them, to see whether their professions and their

deportment are in harmony ; and rejoice in their failures and inconsistencies. "Behold," say they, "how proud, and fashionable, and devoted to pleasure these Christians are—the most unsanctified do not outstrip them in the career of worldliness." A pity it is, my brethren, that so many professing Christians should, by the levity of their spirit, their worldly conformity, and their carnal amusements, provoke the sneer and the taunt of infidelity. Such Christians are, I fear, not only dead in themselves, but a reproach and incubus to the cause of Christ, and a blight and curse to the world in which they live. And if, on the other hand, those who bear the name of Christ will but deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow him daily, their bitterest and most unscrupulous enemies will be constrained to acknowledge their sincerity and applaud their consistency.

3. If any are resolved to pursue a life of pleasure, let them prepare to *meet the consequences*. Two roads are set before you : One is the narrow and unfrequented road of self-denial, watchfulness, prayer and obedience—the other, the broad and crowded road of pleasure, folly and wickedness. Which road, my dear friends, will you pursue? In the narrow way, you must have conflicts, and toils and sorrows ; but, to encourage you in this pilgrimage, you have the examples of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and the noble army of martyrs ; the promise of divine succors and consolations ; and the prospects, more, the assurance, of an immortality of blessedness and glory. In the broad way you may have amusements, and pleasures, and laughter ; and in your career you will be cheered by the example and countenance of the gay, the worldly, and the ungodly. But whither does this road lead? Conscience and revelation furnish no equivocal answer to this inquiry. If there is any heaven, it cannot be for those who have no serious concern about it, and make no preparation to enjoy it. Even infidelity must admit, that if there is a heaven, it is reserved for the serious, the devout, the obedient. If there is any hell, a life of frivolity, pleasure and dissipation must conduct to it. And now, my dear hearers, if deaf to the voice of Christian friendship, conscience and revelation, you are resolved to pursue this road, nerve yourselves to endure the consequences of your folly and guilt. Your abode will be the world of perdition ; your companions the depraved, guilty and wretched—

lost men and lost spirits ; your portion will be the unmixed wrath of God ; your employment will be blaspheming God and the Lamb ; your music will be the wailings of despair ; and your bed a lake of quenchless fire and brimstone. I know that now in the days of your prosperity, and health, and merriment, you harden your hearts, and make light of these things ; but “can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong, in the day that God shall deal with you ?” You are terrified at the approach of danger—you are disconcerted and troubled by the slightest pain—you writhe, and groan, and roar at the extraction of a tooth, or the amputation of a limb—how then can you dwell with devouring fire, with everlasting burnings ? My hearers, you cannot endure the consequences of a life of sinful pleasures—they are intolerable. If you are not infatuated, insane, you will avoid these fearful consequences by a sincere and timely repentance, by an unfeigned submission to the authority of Messiah, and by a life of watchfulness, mortification and prayer. May God of his infinite mercy preserve you from the fascinations of the world, the power of your corrupt lusts, and, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, prepare you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, I humbly beg for Jesus’ sake. Amen !

FASHIONABLE AMUSEMENTS.

In submitting to our readers the foregoing carefully prepared sermon by Dr. Jeter, furnished at our special request, we seize the remaining pages of this No. for a continuance of suggestions commenced in our February number. We then glanced at the importance and difficulty of the subject ; but now turn to the subject itself, upon which, however, we cannot be expected to do more than merely offer a few suggestions.

The love of alternate repose and excitement appears to be natural to man, if not to creation in general. It is perhaps in amazing condescension to this law that inspiration represents Deity Himself as having ‘*rested*,’ after his six day’s work, the world. The same idea is versified by an American bard, when he sings,

“An angel’s wing would droop if long at rest ;
And God Himself, inactive, were no longer blest,”

That man in his present state of being is constantly influenced by this law appears certain.

As regards our animal nature, its existence is commenced and continued by stimuli. Of these, too much or too little is disease, and, beyond a certain point, death. Inasmuch as every acquisition and every act of mind is the product of motive, which is itself the effect of excitement, intellect follows the same general law ; and this is the foundation upon which rests the whole superstructure of morals. The principle is equally true of the volitions of an infant, and the serenest contemplations of the greatest philosopher, of the sinner in all his transgressions and of the believer in all his devotions.

The direction taken by this love of alternate excitement and repose, varies with indefinitely varying circumstances. The sleep of midnight is rest to the wearied laborer, and to the supine Asiatic inactivity is the consummation of bliss. One man seeks excitement in the busy scenes of merchandize by day, and the prattle of his children by night ; another, on the stormy billows of ocean, or on the battle-field, amidst the clash of swords and the roar of cannon. The ball and the novel may be to the young lady what martial ambition was to Napoleon, or the Northwest passage to John Franklin.

Amusement may be merely one of the forms assumed by this natural love of excitement. If this is true, there are only three ways in which it can be wrong : One, *in itself* ; another, when *carried to excess* ; and the third, when *necessarily associated with something* that is itself wrong.

That *all* amusement is *in itself* wrong will not be affirmed. Had it been so, it is not probable that we should have been formed so capable of it, nor that nature herself would have so abounded with the sources of its gratification. Just at this point we take issue with the worldling. Every kind and degree of gratification not taught or authorized in the Bible he *claims* for the world. But upon what authority does he claim it ? We claim all that is not *forbidden*, and we defend this claim. Who gave eloquence, taste, genius, wealth, refinement, friendship, painting, drawing, sculpture, love, poetry, instrumental and vocal music, (the very word itself of the same family with amusement,)—who gave all these to the world ? They are legitimately *ours*. A man's religion does not depend upon possessions, attainments, or

refinement, or the absence of these, but religion itself is not pauperism, nor ignorance, nor vulgarity. She is equally independent of all these and of their opposites. Tell us not of learning as a hand-maid of religion. She has none and needs none. In herself she combines all excellence, or produces it. And, lest we forget it when we come to the right place for it, we here say, that she has been infinitely degraded in the popular mind by the juxtapositions into which she has sometimes been thrown by friends, real and professed. "Such a young lady is very pious, she never goes to parties now." This may be very true, and yet she may be as far from religion as ever. The man who is pining over his poverty, little thinks that this is quite as decisive evidence of love for the world as if he were swallowed up in its wealth and fashion.

But let us not wander. What we wish is to see some masterly pen, such as Dr. Dagg's, or Dr. Fuller's, or Dr. Manly's, or Dr. Jeter's, or Dr. Howell's, apply these tests, or better, if there are any better, to the various popular amusements of this age, especially of this country.

We will suppose, for the purpose of illustration and argument, that it is true of most of these amusements that they are not *in themselves* wrong—a point which we do not, however, concede, except by supposition—even then, if it can be shown that they are almost invariably *carried to excess*, or *necessarily associated with something else* that is wrong, they must come under the ban not only for professors of religion, but for all whom they control.

GAMES OF HAZARD.

Will not the second and third tests exclude all games of hazard, even when played for recreation? In one particular there is a striking analogy between professional gaming and intemperance. Playing for amusement bears the same relation to professional gambling that alcohol as a beverage bears to alcohol in drunkenness. Perhaps no man ever commenced the use of cards with the intention of becoming a professed gambler; but if none were to play, the profession must die. The same is true of intemperance. Dr. Rush, whom none will suspect of fanaticism, held it almost impossible for any man to be for many years accustomed to the beverage, without falling into the habit of inebriation. The

argument is, that in proportion as the stimulant is continued to be used, its sensible effect is diminished, whereas the older the patient becomes, the less able is he to bear the excitement. Finally, when he is most debilitated, most needs it, and needs most of it, he is least able to bear the least, and therefore falls. It was precisely on this principle that the temperance reformation was commenced. Although, therefore, there may be no more harm in a game of dominoes than a julep, and of itself none in either, yet, if excess or association with something unquestionably wrong is almost universal, or sooner or later scarcely avoidable, both are cut off by these tests. Nothing seems more perfectly harmless than for a party of young ladies and gentlemen to spend an hour or a winter's evening at cards ; but from youthful experience fifty years ago, when every body played and drank, we know the fascination of cards and the danger of alcohol. Although brought up in lower county Southern habits, in our own native Virginia, we were never in our whole life intoxicated, nor at a theatre, nor a circus, nor a race, nor a gaming-house, nor a ball, nor any where else where we ought not to be. And yet it is a miracle that we were not a gambler, or a drunkard, or both. Many of our youthful companions, inferior to none in this Old Dominion, fell victims to intemperance, the *pari passu* companion of games of hazard for amusement. We neither claim for ourselves the credit, nor offer ourselves as a model. Better persons than we might have done what we avoided ; but our motive in early life was the fact that we thought it a reflection on religious parents that their children do such things, and at maturity we professed religion, since which time we have had higher sources of gratification.

DANCING.

One of the hardest debates we recollect to have had in our whole life, was with an intelligent and lovely young lady on the subject of dancing. Having surrendered reluctantly, after a noble defence, every other position, she remained firm in this : "But I love dancing, and should die without it." This young lady labored under a metaphysical mistake. Her overflowing abundance and untiring elasticity of spirits loved to vent themselves in something, and that was the channel to which they had been directed. She loved bright

eyes, and smiling faces, and sweet voices, and bounding steps, and warm hearts in sympathy with her own—and all these she found in dancing. It was not, therefore, dancing, but its concomitants, that she loved, and these might all have been found in other associations than this.

THE THEATRE AND CIRCUS.

On some great occasion, the performance and actors being in repute, the elite go to the theatre, but the general attendance is by the profligate and prodigal, and those least able to bear the expense. That it might be reformed is no argument in its favor, if it is not and *never has been*. If the theatre is really what its friends maintain, not a school of vice, but morals, why those guards, and various grades of bar-rooms for the genteel and the vulgar? and casts of seats for the virtuous and the vile? And why does authority so high as that of Walter Scott assert, that in every age it has been patronized and supported mainly by the depraved and base?

RACES.

If a running match of horses is *in itself* as innocent as a walking match, yet if it has about it paraphernalia of wickedness, such as betting and carousing, it falls under the second test.

CONCERTS.

It seems to us, that were there no other objection to concerts than the prodigious expense and the destruction of domesticity, these are enough to condemn them. On the score of expense, we should like to see an investigation of the statistics of these amusements. When the evils of intemperance began to be exposed, Christendom was amazed at such facts as this, that in Massachusetts (in the land of steady habits) alcohol cost as much as education and religion combined. But it was so; and we should not be surprised if it is equally true of the statistics of amusements in this whole country. The domestic institution is confessedly the oldest on earth, States and churches yielding to it. In the religion of the Hebrews it held a conspicuous place, and in Christianity it has not descended. But our fashionable amusements annihilate all this. How can a wife or mother fulfil her duties, out till midnight night after night, leaving her little charges to the care of ignorant slaves, or more igno-

rant and less interested mercenaries or helps? No wonder at the deterioration of human vigor by civilization, when it brings in its train such refining destructives! No mortal can conceive of the domestic mischiefs of this whole round of fashionable amusements in cities, without being where a mother, or wife, or son, or daughter is absent.

Nominally, education is in the ascendant, but whether really so is debatable. Parents wish their children to enjoy the reputation of being educated, but it must be without the labor of acquiring it. Hence there are but two educated classes among us, the one those who have commenced their course after having reached maturity, the other those who have from infancy been taught by learned, skilful, faithful parents. The reason is, that the whole process of every system yields to amusement. So it is of every thing else, and threatens to be even in religion.

We know it will be considered a sufficient answer to all this to assert that we are a misanthrope or an ascetic, and wish to destroy or abridge the gayety and joyousness of the happy and especially of the young. This we might resent as an aspersion of which we stand vindicated by tens of thousands of personal acquaintances and friends, especially among the young and the gay; but we content ourselves by asking our opponent one single question: Is this your whole sum of human happiness? Cut off from what are called fashionable amusements, would your happiness vanish? Then we sincerely pity you, not only as a moral and an immortal, but an intellectual and social being. Where is the boundless laboratory of the wonderful, and beautiful, and curious in nature, above us, below us, within us, all around us? We firmly believe that it is the absence of intelligence and refinement that drives the old and the young from the parlor, the soiree, the library, the promenade, the saunter over hill and dale, the equestrian jaunt, and the thousands of diversions open to cultivated intellects, to look for pleasure in sources of which the danger is certain, or the safety doubtful.

In this hasty glance we have intentionally overlooked religion, because we take it for granted that to the believer all earthly joys are dreams compared with her's. Literature, eloquence, romance, poetry, music, friendship, whatever cultivates and ennobles man, physically, mentally, mor-

ally, all, when they take counsel of her and pay her tribute, find in her their noblest patron and their warmest friend; but, when her rivals, dwindle into insignificance. Compared with her, all else appears as dross to gold, as mud to chrystal streams, as darkness to the noontide sun. Here is of heaven itself the foretaste and the pledge. I bathe, no water cleanses me so—I eat or drink, no food so nourishes the blood or so delights the taste—I ride or walk, or read, or write, or speak, or hear, no exercise invigorates, or cheers, or so enraptures and exalts me.

ED.

OUTLINES OF A SERMON ON THE BENEFITS OF AFFLICTION:

By Rev. H. Keeling.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted.—Ps. cxix, 71.

Good and evil, in any other sense than moral, are so, or become so, in two ways: one in themselves, the other by being overruled or perverted. Wealth or learning, in itself a blessing, perverted is a curse. Sickness and persecution, in themselves evils, may be converted into blessings by the overruling Providence and sanctifying grace of God.

The school of affliction teaches us, among others, these four lessons, viz:

1. It teaches us *sympathy*. Of the unholy dispositions our degenerate race is heir to is the want of feeling for the woes of others.

“There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart;
It does not feel for man.”

Though free from sin, the school of affliction might be the best in which to learn this lesson. “‘The *Captain* of our salvation’ was ‘*made perfect through suffering*,’” how much more his soldiers. As a reason why “we have a high priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities,” St. Paul mentions, “he himself also was tempted in all points like as we are, yet *without sin*.”

Have you not experienced, brethren, that to *read* the tale of human anguish, to *hear* the cries of the distressed, to *witness* poverty and pain—that *nothing* will make you weep with them that weep, but to be yourselves *sufferers*.

In all the *corruptions*, and *weaknesses*, and *throes* of our

sinful postacy—on whatever sea, gulph or stream of this vast water, “the world,” we are dashed—whether “the lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eye,” or “the pride of life,” amidst our perils and buffetings, let us remember, “the same afflictions are accomplished in our brethren in the world and let us learn “to bear one another’s burdens,” and thus “fulfil the law of Christ.”

2. It teaches us *wisdom*. We learn to estimate less highly the possessions and enjoyments of a world unsatisfying in its *nature*, and transitory in its *duration*; to form more just and exalted ideas of the peace and glory of heaven; to trust less in creatures for our happiness and more in the Creator; that to *love, fear and obey* Him is our *interest, obligation, security*.

“Adversity” is a better teacher than “Prosperity.” As the absence of the sun reveals to our delighted gaze the silver moon walking in her brightness, and the shining hosts of heaven marshal’d o’er the plain, so “adversity,” not “prosperity,” brings to our minds the awful, the pleasing, the imposing truths of religion. Adversity is a better teacher than Philosophy or Learning.

“If wisdom is our lesson, (and what else
Ennobles man? what else have angels learn’d?)
Grief! more proficient in thy school are made
Than genius or proud learning e’er could boast.”

Dr. Young.

3. It teaches us *obedience*. Or, I should rather have said, “In the *school* of affliction we are taught *sympathy, wisdom and obedience*; but the *Teacher* is *God*.” However the expression conveys the idea: “Is *Christ* the better teacher or the *schools*?”

In attributing so much to sanctified affliction, (for it is of *this* that we speak; afflictions *unblessed* are, as all blessings are, abused into curses,) we mean not to deny the efficacy of *Faith*. Faith works by love, &c.; or of *Hope*: every one that hath this hope in him purifieth, &c.; or of *Love*: the love of Christ constraineth us, because, &c. But it is in *this school* that these principles and graces are implanted in the heart and made to produce fruit. And between these ideas there is perfect harmony. Let us illustrate our meaning by considering the *sufferings* of Christ in their connection with his *conformity to the will* of the Father, and

his *anticipation* of joy; and let these represent the *affliction*, the *obedience* and the *hope* of the saint. In "*suffering*" the Redeemer "*learned obedience.*" "Although he was a son, yet learned he *obedience* by the things which he *suffered*, and became the author," &c. But this was done *in prospect* of glory. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the *joy* that was set before him *endured* the cross despising the shame," &c.

4. It teaches us *submission*. Submission to God is of *two* kinds: *voluntary* and *involuntary*—the former is a *virtue*, the latter a *penalty endured*.

Voluntary submission is a sweet acquiescence of the soul to the will and disposal of God, in his Providence and Grace. *Involuntary* is a prostration and overthrow proceeding from sinful rebellion.

The difference is as between the parental correction, which brings to reflection and reform the erring son, and the judicial sentence which carries the flagitious offender to the place of execution. Of the one you have an instance in the tears and restoration of Peter; of the other in the obduracy and ruin of Judas.

Alas! for the man who is proof against admonition, kindness, expostulation, threatening, conscience and AFFLICTION. If, with such teachers, in such schools, he remains incorrigible in rebellion against God, and rejection of the Messiah, his destruction is inevitable. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."—Matt. 21, 44. But blessed the man in whose disposition and character are the qualities and prospects implied in the text, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Amen.

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THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE FREE AGENCY OF MAN:

A Sermon, by REV. WILLIAM BULLEIN JOHNSON, D. D., delivered at Edgefield C. H., South Carolina.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain.”—Acts ii: 22, 23.

— This passage, addressed by the apostle Peter to the Jews, contains the statement of two important facts. These facts open to our view, with clearness and certainty, two of the fundamental principles of the divine government:—The Sovereignty of God and the Free Agency of Man.

The surrender of Jesus of Nazareth, is asserted to be by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. From this fact we learn that God is a Sovereign, and that his sovereignty is absolute. For if he had not been pleased to deliver up his Son, no power in the universe could have taken him. The truth of this position is sustained by the following words of Jesus to Pilate: “Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.”

The crucifixion of Jesus is affirmed to be “with wicked hands.” Such a deed could be consummated only by free agents. Their *hearts* must have consented to the foul deed. The circumstances of Christ’s betrayal, mock trial and condemnation; his crucifixion and the guard placed over the sepulchre where he lay; the solicitude manifested by his enemies, to discredit the fact of his resurrection, with the confession of Judas, and the compunction of his murderers,

on the day of pentecost; all show that the actors in the death of Christ were free, and willingly and wickedly perpetrated the deed.

The occasion on which the Sovereignty of God and the Free Agency of Man are thus developed, exhibits *both* in the clearest and most forcible manner. God foreknew that man would fall and be exposed to everlasting misery. With bowels of compassion yearning over his lost creature, God determined to *give his Son* for his recovery. This gift, under the circumstances of the case, is an exercise of the Divine attributes of so elevated and glorious a character, as to furnish in itself the most conclusive proof of the Sovereignty of the Divine Being. The death of this Son, by the hands of his own peculiar people, after a life of pure disinterested benevolence for *their* special good, and the good of the whole world, affords an instance of moral depravity more base than could be afforded by any other instance within the compass of man's agency. In its perpetration the actors were free. All minor deeds and moral delinquency, therefore, proceed upon the same principle; for they are committed with the *heart*.

In selecting a passage of scripture, then, from which I should deduce the principles of God's sovereignty and man's free agency, I know none more appropriate than the one before us. In the discussion of it, I shall proceed,

I. In the first place, to treat of the Divine Sovereignty.

The scriptures assert, that "God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" that "he is in one mind and none can turn him, and what his soul desireth, that he doeth;" that "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" They further assert, that "he giveth no account of his matters." From these scriptures, I state the doctrine of God's Sovereignty to be, that he forms his own plans in wise and deliberate counsel, free from any control exterior to himself, and that he carries on these plans to their complete fulfillment, independently and irresistibly. In the exercise of this sovereignty, nothing is conceived or done upon mere arbitrary principles. There are always the wisest and best reasons—reasons of eternal moment for all that God does—reasons originating in his own perfect mind.

Having thus stated the doctrine, I shall proceed to its proof and illustration in a concise view of the nature and attributes of the Divine Being.

1. God is self-existent. When Moses was sent to deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, God said unto him, "I AM THAT I AM." And he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, "I AM hath sent me unto you." These terms express self-existence, by which we learn that God derives his being from no source exterior to himself. All other beings are creatures, and hence have an existence that is derived. God only has "neither beginning of days nor end of life;" for he is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

2. God is eternal. "I lift up my hand to heaven," saith Jehovah, "and say, I live forever." David, in a solemn address to God, thus speaks: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands, they shall perish, but thou shalt endure—yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." These words are expressive of a proper eternity, and very satisfactorily denote the endless duration of the Divine Being.

3. God is omniscient. "His understanding is infinite." "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." There is, then, with Jehovah neither past nor future. Nothing can ever arise throughout eternity, of which he was not thoroughly apprised from the beginning.

4. God is omnipresent. "Behold," saith the Psalmist, "the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Thus it is evident, that God's "eyes are every where, beholding the evil and the good."

5. God is omnipotent. "The Lord said, I am the Almighty God." "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens." "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." None, therefore, in the heavens or the earth, can stay his Almighty arm.

6. God is infinitely wise. The scripture saith: "To God only wise be glory." "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens." "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord." It is in the exercise of his boundless wisdom, that God pursues the best ends by the best means, so that none can frustrate his purposes. "The wise he taketh in his own craftiness." "The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of it he will restrain."

7. God is love or infinite benevolence. "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." All the arrangements of God's works are adjusted to promote happiness. For when he had ended his work of creation, he pronounced it all good. It is this love that prompts him to action; of which the most ample proof is given in the death of his Son to redeem man. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to die for us."

8. God is unchangeable. This attribute necessarily results from those which we have been considering. For if Jehovah be self-existent and eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, infinitely wise and boundless in love, there can be found no place in him for change. There is, therefore, with "him no variableness or shadow of turning." For "he is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent," or change his plans or designs. The laws by which he governs the universe are, therefore, unchangeable. His subjects are consequently apprised in the fullest manner of the absolute certainty with which his purposes will be accomplished.

Thus do we see that the moral Governor of the universe is Sovereign; that he hath a *right* to do as he pleases,

throughout his illimitable dominions, and that he exercises this right without control.

It hath pleased this great and good Being to bring into existence a vast system of worlds, and to "uphold them by the word of his power." The only motive that could have induced him thus to put forth his mighty energies, originated in himself. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Ere creation began, there was no being, save Jehovah, the former of all things. "With whom," then, "took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" It was love; the impulsive passion of his nature, that inclined him to diffuse his own rich store of goodness and blessing upon a universe of created beings. Thus did creation arise and become the commencement of the revelation, the unfolding of the great I AM, and in its progress and consummation it will be so ordered as to develop *all* his attributes, his *whole* nature and perfections.

All possible plans for accomplishing God's designs, were fully and clearly before him. It is, therefore, demonstrably certain, that, all things considered, he chose the best, and so framed and adjusted it in all its parts, as to secure complete success. For if a being, who is infinite in all his attributes, and who is the source of all being, shall determine upon a plan of operation, and put it into a course of action, what hindrance shall prevent its completion? What can finite hate, however furious; limited cunning, however sagacious; created power, however strong; finite knowledge, however extensive; avail against such a being? All the hate and cunning, knowledge and power, that the most exalted creature could possess, has been employed by Satan for the purpose of thwarting the plans of his Maker, but all in vain. "He has spent his strength for nought, and in vain." It may, therefore, be affirmed without contradiction, "that the counsel of the Most High shall stand, and that he will do all his pleasure."

To this it may be objected, that sin, which is a violation of God's laws, has entered his dominions, and frustrated his designs. That sin has entered God's dominions is true, and that it is a violation of his law is also true. But that God's plan is thereby frustrated, is not true, seeing that it is the plan of an Almighty Being.

For the more satisfactory comprehension of this point, it is proper that we understand what God purposes to accomplish as his ultimate object. From the scriptures we shall derive the necessary information. God says by his servant Isaiah, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it, for how should my name be polluted, and I will not give my glory to another." When the angels descended to announce the birth of the Son of God to the shepherds, they came, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest." The apostle writes to the Corinthians in the same strain: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen!" We thus learn with entire satisfaction, that the ultimate object of God's plan is his own glory; and that good angels and redeemed men regard it in the same light, and make it the chief object of *their* pursuit.

It is evident from the nature of things, that, in the work of creation, nothing short of the Divine glory could be the supreme object of the Divine Being. For to whatever excellence a creature may attain, he can possess and exhibit nothing that he has not received from his Creator. "For," saith the apostle, "who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou didst not receive it?" Let it be understood, that the glory of God is not the ephemeral honor that comes from men, who bestow it as frequently upon the undeserving as upon the worthy; but the substantial glory that arises from successful benevolent effort, in the prosecution of which, whilst the greatest good is sought, the Divine Benefactor exhibits, in principle and in act, a perfect model of pure and holy character. In making his glory, then, the supreme object of his pursuit, he necessarily identifies with its success the happiness of all good and holy beings. Can the belief, then, be for a moment entertained, that the introduction of sin into the dominions of such a being could be allowed to frustrate his plan, or to put in jeopardy its great object—*his own glory*?

It is absolutely certain, that sin could not, either by

stealth, surprise or force, come into the dominions of him who neither slumbers nor sleeps; whose knowledge is infinite, and whose arm is omnipotent. The entrance of sin was, therefore, fully known to him, and as certainly admitted by him. Indeed it may be safely affirmed, that its admission formed a part of his plan. Or why should he, who could so easily have prevented it, allow it to come into his dominions? And if it did form a part of Jehovah's plan, then it is evident that its admission is designed as a means of promoting the Divine glory. //

In proof of these positions, I refer to the gift of Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." This precious gift was resolved on "ere man was born or Satan fell." Hence Christ is represented as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" that is, in the purposes of God, though he was not actually put to death, until long after. The benefits of this provision were experienced by our first parents immediately after their transgression; in that they were not subjected to immediate death, and forever banished from the Divine presence and favor. In view of the interposition of the Redeemer, who, in the fulness of time, should be "born of a woman, made under the law, and subject to the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law," God promised and foretold, in the garden of Eden, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—that is, that Christ should destroy the works of the devil. The provision of the Redeemer by Jehovah, previous to the admission of sin into his dominions, proves most clearly that its admission was contemplated by him as an event that would certainly take place; but an event that he would overrule for his own glory.

The evils which have resulted from sin are partly visible in this world. But their full character will only be developed in the world that is to come. Now the extirpation of these evils through the mediation of the Son of God, exhibits the glory of the Divine Being in a manner that far transcends all other displays of that glory.

In the creation of the material universe, the wisdom, goodness and power of God, are richly displayed. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." In the creation of holy intelligences, to occupy this universe, to receive the munificence of

their Creator, to know, to serve, to obey, and to enjoy him, a higher display of this glory was made; for these intelligences were formed in his likeness. They bore his image as rational, holy and immortal beings, capable of an endless progression in knowledge and virtue. But of these intelligences, angels and men have fallen. A violent moral disruption has taken place in God's government, threatening with entire overthrow the plan which he had devised. But this disruption, so far from endangering in the slightest degree the stability of his purposes, will only serve to aggrandize and render them, if possible, more firm and secure. For "no weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper." He who in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can as easily bring a transcendently glorious moral light out of the moral darkness that sin hath brought into his government. For "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the overthrow and punishment of "the angels that kept not their first estate," a development of the divine character was presented to the moral universe in a manner at once new and startling. Justice, then, for the first time, unsheathed her sword to vindicate her insulted claims. By her inflexible decision, the rebel hosts are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the Great Day. Moral government now assumed a new aspect.—Transgression of its laws, till then unknown, was visited with immediate and severe punishment. Deep and lasting were the impressions that were made by this display of justice upon the minds of all holy intelligences. They beheld the majesty of law sustained by infinite power; and learned that the supremacy of the law-giver was not to be held in doubt. Taught thus forcibly that obedience, implicit obedience, is the duty of the creature, however exalted, they became more firmly established in their loyalty to their Maker.

From the fact of this display of justice in the divine administration, there is reason to believe that its occurrence was necessary to the carrying out of the divine plan,—*the promotion of God's glory*. For the exercise of justice is one mode of exhibiting the love or benevolence of Jehovah,

seeing that it has for its object the preservation of his rights, and the rights of all moral intelligences. If, then, the rebel angels had been suffered to go unpunished, the safety and happiness of those that remained faithful to their Lord would have been in jeopardy. Nay, the lenity of the sovereign thus exercised would have exhibited his weakness, and invited repeated acts of disobedience. But by the exercise of justice upon the fallen angels, he has vindicated his authority as a righteous Governor; he has proclaimed his government to be one of law; and taught the moral universe that their rights are secure in his hands. Thus, then, is the glory of God promoted by the infliction of punishment upon Satan and his rebellious host.

But angels are not the only violators of law. Men, too, have sinned. Again did justice awake; again was her sword drawn. But, O! wonder of the universe, it fell not upon the guilty! Mercy interposed, that "grace might reign through righteousness" in the salvation of the guilty.

Man's transgression involved him in infinite guilt, so that the penalty hanging over him was an endless curse. Man could not suffer and survive such a penalty.

"Die he, or justice must;
Unless for him, some other able, and as willing pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death."

No *guilty* being could do this. No *innocent* creature would be allowed to do it. Who, then, shall "pay the rigid satisfaction?" No other being save the author of the law himself can do it. And behold his condescension. The second person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, assumes man's nature, sin only excepted, "is made of a woman, made under the law and subject to the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law," from its eternal curse. "God manifest in the flesh" makes the great sacrifice. It is accepted. The law is "magnified and made honorable." God can now be just and the justifier of the ungodly that believe in Christ. "The church of God" lost in sin and exposed to the curse, is "purchased with his own blood," redeemed and raised to glory everlasting.

The great design of the whole is, as expressed by the apostle, "to the glory of God the Father." Thus "shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem

of beauty." "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The attributes of God here receive their brightest illustration. Concentrating their rays in the sacrifice for sin by the Lord Jesus Christ, they shine with a lustre far more resplendent than on any former occasion. Love, Wisdom, Justice, Faithfulness, Power, Knowledge, Mercy, all unite harmoniously in the redemption of man, to exhibit the glory of the great God in its most magnificent display. For this reason it is that JEHOVAH JESUS, the Divine Redeemer, has received "a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It will, I trust, be now clearly seen, that sin has not frustrated God's plan, but that, under his controlling power and wisdom, it has been made the occasion of contributing to its advancement. Let us, then, with devout and grateful affections, rejoice in the declarations of the Most High by the prophet Isaiah: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

Having now clearly stated and proven the Sovereignty of God to be a doctrine of truth, I proceed to treat,

II. Secondly, of the Free Agency of Man.

The chief instruments in the fulfillment of God's plan are rational, moral beings. These were created holy and perfect, with capacities for answering the end of their existence. The angels that sinned were originally numbered with those bright spirits that now surround the throne above; and "God made man upright." The fallen angels and apostate man were created free agents, endowed with liberty of choice. They were made "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." Hence arose their accountability: they were placed under moral law, and required to obey its precepts. This fact affords clear evidence of their being free agents. For neither mere machines nor irrational beings could be subjects of *moral* government, because such being devoid of understanding, could *not comprehend* the princi-

ple of moral obligation. They could not attain to a knowledge of the law, and therefore could not be accountable to the Law-Giver. But angels and men knew the law, and comprehended the principle of moral obligation. They knew their duty, but they did it not. They then were accountable, because *free agents*.

In illustration and proof of the free agency of rational beings, I appeal to the history of those of whom we have some knowledge. These are—angels and men. We read in the scripture of “angels which kept not their first estate.” It thus appears, that “their first estate” was committed to their own keeping. They were, therefore, in a state of trial or probation, free to keep or lose that “estate.” They “left their own habitation,” and therefore lost “their first estate.” This loss could be effected only by disobedience; for such is the nature of moral government, that, as its favors are secured by obedience to its laws, so its frowns are incurred by disobedience. It is written that “God spared not the angels that sinned.” “Sin is the transgression of the law, for where no law is there is no transgression.” These angels were evidently under law, the law of God, whose penalty is “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” From this account of the fallen angels, it is manifest that *they* are free agents.

Our first parents were placed in the garden of Eden in full maturity of intellect and feeling. God bestowed upon them all things necessary to their happiness. One prohibition only was laid on them. “Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Eve, seduced by Satan, eat of the forbidden tree. She gave of it to Adam, and he eat also. The only power that Satan employed in beguiling Eve, was the force of argument and persuasion. But argument and persuasion can be employed only with rational beings, who are free to choose or to refuse. To all the sophistry of Satan, Eve’s positive and fixed answer should have been, “*My Creator has forbidden me to eat of the fruit of that tree.*”

And here let it be remembered, that it is not essential to the authority of a law, or to the obligation of the subject to obey, that the reasons of its enactment should accompany it.

It is enough that the lawgiver promulge the law. The subject is bound to obey. If any of you, my hearers, were to order your laborers to cut up your crop in the present month (May) ere its maturity fitted it for harvest, it would be *their* duty to obey ; although it might not be *your* pleasure to assign a reason for the command. Of the correctness of this principle, the scriptures afford a conclusive exemplification. Abraham, who had received his son Isaac by promise, with the assurance, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, was commanded to offer him up as a burnt offering. No reason was assigned for a command so extraordinary so contradictory to the promises, and apparently so derogatory to the honor of God. The Patriarch interposed no difficulty, offered no remonstrance, but, in the true spirit of filial obedience set out to comply with the divine command.

But to return to our first parents: Adam, when called to account by his maker, answered : “ the woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat.” In this reply, he acknowledged the act without any excuse, but accompanied it with the base insinuation, that it was his Maker’s fault. *The woman*, said he, whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. He, the Lord of the new creation, the head of the woman, after receiving the fruit from her hand and wickedly eating it, that he should thus speak of her to their common father! Oh the meanness and degradation, to which sin subjects the soul! And what, in this account from Adam himself, appears to have been his state? An Apostle declares, that “ Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Does it not evidently appear, that he disobeyed knowingly, freely, without compulsion or restraint? Then was he free, free indeed to accept or refuse the offered fruit. From his voluntary acceptance arose his guilt.

The conclusive evidence of the freedom of our first parents, as well as of their guilt in the whole transaction, is given in the sentence pronounced upon them: “ Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Driven from Eden’s once hallowed but now polluted, groves, and fountains, and walks, they went forth to wander in confusion and dismay amidst the wilds of the dreary forest. A long train of

woes followed them, and descending to their posterity, serve as mementoes of their degenerate ancestry. Such punishment could not be inflicted by a righteous God upon subjects, who were not free in the commission of the deed, for the perpetration of which, the sentence was incurred. Thus is it manifestly evident, that the *first parents* of the human family were created free agents.

And now, my hearers, permit me to ask, if these cases do not present a fair representation of your own state, as the subjects of God's government. Do you not *feel* that you are free? Do you not engage in your respective pursuits and prosecute your different plans, under a consciousness that you have a right of choice, that you are free agents? When you sin, do you not know, that you do it freely? Is there not within you a monitor, that reproves you for your transgressions, and admonishes you to abandon them? It is true, that this monitor, conscience, may be bribed, or so oppressed as to be silenced, nay, that it may be "seared with a hot iron," and thus be rendered insensible for a season. Then men may suppose that they are excusable for their sins. They may plead in extenuation of their iniquities, that they have derived an evil nature from their first father, and thus throw off a *sense* of their accountability. When urged to repent and believe the gospel, they may reply, "we cannot do it. Unless God impart his grace, we must remain impenitent and unbelieving, and if we perish the fault will not be ours."

But let conviction for sin seize such, let the truth of God be felt in its power, and how altered will be their feelings, their *sense* of accountability, and their language. At once, they acknowledge that their sin is their crime. With full and deep contrition, they confess that the guilt of their misdoings is all their own. No more do they cast the blame of their sinful conduct on their first parents or any other being. Each exclaims for himself, *I, I am the only one to blame; I would not have Christ to reign over me. God be merciful to me a sinner!*

Does such a one, under the influences of the light, that now shines into his heart from above, through the teachings of God's word, see the truth, or does he not? Is he in the light, or is he in darkness? It is evident, that he now sees things as they are taught in the holy scriptures. He

sees clearly then that he acted freely when in the commission of sin, for he could not be sensible of guilt, on any other principle. The following illustration will make this plain:

A stronger man binds a weaker one, places a dagger in his hand, and makes him, against his will, thrust it into the heart of another, and death ensues. Who is the guilty man? Not the weaker. And why? Because, though his hand carried the dagger to the heart of the other, yet it was carried thither against his will, and by a force he could not resist. He was not a free agent. But, if he had willingly and intentionally seized the dagger and perpetrated the murder, then, though the stronger man had tempted him to do it, yet he would have been guilty, for it rested with him to yield to the temptation or to resist it. Thus does it appear that free agency in a rational being is essential to the commission of crime, and to the consciousness of guilt.

The sinner consents to the violation of God's law. He sins against light and knowledge, and the checks of conscience, in the face of warnings the most alarming, of remonstrances the most faithful, and invitations the most tender and impressive. Life and death are set before him. He chooses death and refuses life. Is he not in all this a free agent? If any doubt yet remains on this point, the words of Christ must remove it. "Whosoever will," says the Saviour, "let him come and take of the water of life freely." But he adds, "ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life."

But it may still be objected, that the scriptures represent opposers of the truth, as "taken captive by the devil at his will." And, therefore, they cannot be free. Light may be thrown on this subject, by distinguishing between the *cause*, and the *occasion* of an act. Judas was offered thirty pieces of silver, as the price of his master. He accepted the offer, and betrayed him. In this case the *offer* furnished the *occasion* of betraying the Son of God, but was certainly not the *cause*. This was in the traitor himself, "because he was a thief and held the bag." "The love of money, which is the root of all evil," was the cause of the direful act, the offer of money furnished only the *occasion*, the *opportunity* of its perpetration.

We are now prepared to understand the manner in which

sinner "are taken captive by the devil at his will." This subtle adversary, with a sagacity, more than human, finds in every man, a heart full of enmity against his Maker. Entrance into such a place is not difficult. He soon ascertains the strength or weakness of his intended victim. This done, he presents his temptations according to the temperament of mind, situation and circumstances. The victim falls in with the design of the enemy, and in process of time is taken captive." The victory is not gained forcibly or in violation of will. In the whole process of attack, the consent of the victim is obtained. The citadel is surrendered by the friend of the conqueror, who throws open the gates and requests him to take the keys. Thenceforth the conqueror rules in the heart of his victim, but it is "the heart of the child of disobedience," a fit domain for the tyrannical sway of the *first transgressor* and *deceiver*. "Let no man then say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." It is evident then, that the captivity of the sinner to the devil is a willing captivity, perfectly consistent with his free agency.

The proof of man's free agency receives additional confirmation from the fact of his being a subject of law, of moral and civil law. All just government on earth is only a copy of the righteous government of God over the universe. All the principles of equity and morality, of authority and subjection, are derived from the revelation, that the moral governor of all worlds has made to his rational creatures. We have seen, that under God's more immediate government, angels and men were created free agents. It is on this principle that they are rewardable and punishable. On the same principle is it, that men are the subjects of civil government on earth. The enactments of the constituted authorities are clothed with penalties. Obedience to the laws will secure the protection of the government. Disobedience will bring down the penalty. But if the people are not free, if they have not the right of choice, how are they accountable for their doings? It is evident that freedom is essential to accountability, as accountability is essential to subjection under law and government. For example :

The law threatens the citizen with death, as the punishment for murder. The foul deed is perpetrated, and the culprit is arraigned. He acknowledges the act, but pleads exemption from the punishment, on the ground of his incapacity, to have refrained from the deed. He says, I am not free. I am descended from Adam, whose fallen nature I have inherited, and by whose influence I perpetrated the deed. I am, therefore, not accountable, for I am not free. This is placing in its proper light the subject of the inability which men sometimes urge as an excuse for their bad deeds. But who does not see the sophistry of the culprit? He first gluts the vengeance of his heart in the murder of a fellow creature, and then claims exemption from punishment, because, *as he says*, he could not, from the necessity of his nature, refrain from committing the deed. If his plea be valid, all distinction between virtue and vice is destroyed, law is a nullity, and government—a farce. But we have not yet reached this point. The apprehension of mankind is not yet so far misdirected, as to yield to the claims of the culprit on these grounds. The arm of the law will treat him as one that is free, and therefore accountable; and his own conscience will teach him the same truth, in accents louder than the thunder of heaven. It is thus evident that the existence of righteous government on earth can be sustained only upon the principle, that the people are free, accountable beings. Finally—

The free agency of man must be a doctrine of truth, because God deals with men, as free agents. The account of Adam's creation and fall, will be admitted by all, I presume, as affording proof that *he* was created a free agent. But it is supposed by some, that, upon his lapse from duty, he lost his freedom, and transmitted to his descendants a will, not free. In other words, that his posterity are not free agents. If this be true, it will necessarily follow, that they are not accountable, and as God is a righteous God, it cannot be supposed that he will hold them amenable to his authority, and punishable for their sins. But is this the fact? When Cain slew Abel, did not God call him to account, and punish him in an awful manner?

The ante-deluvians became extremely wicked, and on that account, God sent the deluge upon them, so that, with the exception of eight persons, “they sank like lead in

the mighty waters." The five cities of the plain, whose wickedness cried to heaven, were, with the exception of a few members of one family, "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." The Egyptians, Babylonians, Tyrians, and other nations, have all felt the mighty hand of God, pressing heavily upon them in their overthrow and misery. But on what principle were these judgments inflicted? On no other, surely, than the principle of guilt, incurred by voluntary disobedience to righteous authority.

The Lord God chose a peculiar people, whom he established in Palestine with all the means of knowing, and glorifying him. But they became stiff-necked and rebellious. The Lord sent them prophets, who admonished them of their sins, and exhorted them to return unto him. Joshua said unto them, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." Elijah came unto all the people and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him." God himself condescended to reason with them, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given to him." God sent his Son as the final means of reclaiming the Jews, but in vain. They would not submit to him, but took him, and with wicked hands crucified and slew him. Refusing to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they made God a liar, and thus fell from their high privileges. Broken off by unbelief, they remain to this day an awful monument of voluntary transgression, and its dreadful results.

Under the gospel dispensation, the Lord deals with men upon the same principle that he dealt with the Jews and the Gentiles in former days. To us is the gospel of this salvation sent, and "He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them." "God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality: eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness: indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile. But glory, honor and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law," that is without the revealed law, "shall perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law," that is under revelation, "shall be judged by the law" of that revelation. Thus does it appear throughout the scriptures, that Jews and Gentiles, under every dispensation, are regarded and treated by Jehovah as under law. But this could not be under the administration of a righteous judge, unless they were free agents and accountable for their deeds.

But to the doctrine of free agency in man, objections arise in the minds of many from the cases of Pharaoh and Judas. Of the first, the scriptures assert that God hardened his heart, and of the second, that his deed in betraying the Son of God was the subject of prophecy. It is asked, therefore, how are these men free agents? And if *they* were not free, how are *any others* of the race free?

For the right understanding of Pharaoh's case, it is important to consider again the nature of God. This is love. It is his essential nature. Now "love is the fulfilling of the law, and worketh no ill to his neighbor." God has commanded his creatures to love one another; and an apostle has assured us, that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Can it be for a moment supposed, that God could ever influence a subject of his law to disobey his commands? Could he, who gave his Son to obey the law and become its end for righteousness to every sinner that believeth, influence any poor sinner

to disobey that law, or any command of its author? What! The lawgiver make the subject disobey! Never! never! Impossible! Hence it is evident that God did not by any *direct* or *positive* influence harden Pharaoh's heart. Yet it is affirmed that God did harden the heart of Pharaoh. Let us examine this interesting case. God said to Pharaoh, "In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." Pharaoh occupied the throne of Egypt; a throne the most splendid of that day. God gave him Moses, a man "mighty in words and deeds," to be his counsellor—his right arm. There were in his dominions a people, the brethren of Moses, to whose illustrious ancestor, Joseph, the nation owed under God, its existence and its glory; the labors of this people contributed daily to the ornament and security of the land. But these people, to whom the nation was so much indebted, were oppressed and cruelly treated by Pharaoh. This monarch, imagining himself secure in the possession of his kingdom and his glory, feared no evil. Danger was nevertheless at hand. His abused power and insolent pride cried aloud for justice. God's time for delivering his people had come. Yea, "the set time had come." Moses, who by a hasty and ill advised act, had been obliged to flee from Egypt forty years before, was now recalled by the Lord, and in company with Aaron, his brother, was sent to Pharaoh with this reasonable request, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." To this moderate request, Pharaoh, under strong excitement, said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." The insolence of this answer at once exhibits the native hardness of the king's heart.

The Lord sent judgments upon Pharaoh, under the influence of which, he relented, and gave permission to the Hebrews to depart. But when by his request Moses interceded for their removal, and they were withdrawn, his opposition gathered new strength, and he revoked the permission.—Now, by means of these judgments, the Lord exerted a powerful influence upon Pharaoh, and his heart was softened. But when that influence was withdrawn, his heart returned to its natural hardness. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart,

then, by the Lord, consists not in any direct influence that he exerted upon him to make him wicked, but in leaving him, as a free agent, to the deliberate choice of his own will, in the indulgence of which, he became worse and wiser. Persevering in his disobedience to God, "the measure of his iniquity became full;" and in his last desperate effort against Israel, the final judgment of the Most High fell upon him, and he and his host "sank like lead in the mighty waters." Thus was God's power displayed, that "his name might be declared in all the earth." But in the whole matter, it is evident that the freedom of Pharaoh, as an accountable being, was not in the slightest degree infringed.

Of Judas, the apostle thus speaks: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." He then quotes the following passages from the 69th and 109th Psalms: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take;" and applies them to Judas. But in neither of these Psalms is the name of Judas found. They contain general prophecies concerning the enemies of David. And as he was an eminent type of Christ, the prophecies may be considered as comprehending the enemies of the Redeemer. By the direction of the Holy Ghost, Peter applied them to Judas, as he was one of the Saviour's enemies. They, therefore, contain no particular prophecy of Judas as the betrayer of our Lord.

But admitting for a moment that Judas and his deed *were* the subject of direct immediate prophecy, yet that would not relieve his case, or take aught from the proof of his free agency. Foreknowledge is the foundation of prophecy. Prophecy, therefore, only announces what will come to pass. But the mere foreknowledge of an act or its doer, does not make the doer perform the act.

"If I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain, unforeknown."

God, who is omniscient, sees the end from the beginning. He knows what is in man, and fully understands what every man will do. He clearly foresees all the future develop-

ments which the *sinful principle* will receive in the actions of men. When, therefore, he predicts what will be done, he does not influence the agent, but leaving him to his own voluntary choice, the agent performs his own pleasure.

Let us now look into the character of Judas. A short time after his appointment to the apostleship, Jesus said to his disciples, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" that is, an adversary—a traitor. "He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who should betray him, being one of the twelve." On another occasion, when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with very costly ointment, Judas said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." A short time before he betrayed Jesus, it is said that the devil entered into him; that is, took full possession of him.

Now in all this account of Judas, it is evident that he acted freely. No intimation is given that the Lord influenced his heart to do wickedly. And his own voluntary confession of his sin in betraying innocent blood, with his awful death, fully proves that he was a free agent. "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood, and he went and cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed and went and hanged himself." The whole conduct of the chief priests and elders proves them to have been equally free in their course, and hence their guilt in receiving Christ and putting him to death. And hence, too, their awful and long protracted punishment. Thus in the cases of Pharaoh and Judas, does it appear that their free agency is clearly proved.

The capacity of the human mind is large, its powers various, and its energy of great extent. In man's fall these properties of his mind remain essentially the same. But they are not under the guidance of the original law of his nature—*holiness*. "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Hence it is that men practice all forms of evil, from the slothful servant who hides his Lord's talent in a napkin in the earth; to the traitor, who,

for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, betrays that Master into the hands of his enemies and murderers. Now since Jehovah has admitted *sin* into his dominions, and will overrule it for his own glory, he may as consistently use the *sinner* for the same purpose. It is upon this principle that Pharaoh was raised up to shew God's power, that his name might be declared in all the earth. The evil nature of this monarch assumed the forms of pride and oppression. The throne afforded the opportunity of exercising both to a great extent. It was not necessary, then, that God should exert the slightest influence upon his mind, to make him a fit instrument for accomplishing his purpose. He had only to give him, in his providence, the opportunity, and leave him to himself, and the end would be answered, as the facts have fully proved.

The same principle lies at the foundation of the case of Judas. The Saviour "must die for the people." A good man would not put him to death. Wicked hands must be employed in the deed. Judas, one out of many of the same wicked stamp is at hand. He is taken into the holy company of Jesus and his apostles. He himself is an apostle. The intercourse and duties of his new station are calculated to improve his morals. But "the love of money, which is the root of all evil," is the master passion of his soul. He is a thief, a devil, and no human means makes him better. Does it require the power of God to dispose the heart of this man to take the bribe of treason? The offer from human hands is sufficient. It is presented, and all the purity and nobleness of the Son of God, the dignified office of apostle, character, reputation, peace of conscience—all is nothing in his view. They are weighed in the balance with the silver, and kick the beam. The silver preponderates, the bait is greedily swallowed, the innocent Jesus is betrayed, the soul of the traitor is ruined.

It is on the same principle also that the Babylonian monarch was used by the Lord as his "battle axe." "O Assyria," saith God by Isaiah, "the rod of mine anger and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil and to take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit *he* meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so;

but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.” “Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent, and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand hath found as a nest, the riches of the people, and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there were none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.”

This monarch was doing his own pleasure, and not regarding the authority of God. As a free agent, being intoxicated with pride, he treads down the nations of the earth. At the same time, the Lord uses him in those very deeds as his instrument for punishing the nations. And on the same principle is it that every sinner goes on in his course and is controlled by the Lord. He leaves men to their natural propensities, and they do wrong. But their wrong deeds, he overrules contrary to their intentions, and thus makes even their “wrath to praise him.”

We are now prepared to understand the Saviour’s words to Pilate, “Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.” God gave the Jews up to a hard heart and a reprobate mind. They threw off all moral restraints, and as they had not the power of life and death, they took the innocent Jesus to Pilate for condemnation. Thus was he brought under his power as Governor of Judea. Christ adds, “Therefore he that delivered me to you, hath the greater sin.” A wicked man, in the presence of an officer of the law, will feel restrained from violating its commands. But when the officer withdraws, and the fear of detection is removed, he will indulge the wicked desire of his heart. Such is the constitution of the mind, that whilst removal of restraint will lead to the perpetration of evil deeds, its presence will put an interdict upon their commission. Instead, then, of God’s influence being necessary to harden the hearts of men, it is essential to their being softened. It is when his restraints are removed that the sinner gives himself up to his wickedness. But it is when these

restraints are all taken away that the man appears in his true character. Then is it evident that, when God gave the Jews up to their own heart's lust, they acted out their true character in delivering up the Son of God to be crucified. Therefore is it that they had the greater sin, for they did it voluntarily, without fear or compulsion.

Having now, as I trust, clearly proven that man is a free agent, I shall proceed, in conclusion, to make some remarks on both the Sovereignty of God and the Free Agency of Man.

And my first remark is,

1. That we should never separate what God hath joined together. It has been made to appear in this discourse, that God is a Sovereign, and that man is a free agent. In considering them separately, each may approve itself to every mind, but in attempting to reconcile them, serious difficulties may arise. From our inability to reconcile these two points, we may be tempted to reject the one at the expense of the other, or to reject both. But let it be considered that if each be true, separately regarded, then both should be taken together as constituting fundamental principles of the divine government, which the moral governor clearly sees and comprehends. And *that* should be sufficient. *Our* duty is to come "to the law and the testimony," because they form the only unerring standard of truth.

It may, however, be important further to consider, whether it be possible for a righteous, wise and good Creator, to form a rational moral being without freedom of will—liberty of choice; whether such a being would not be a palpable contradiction. What is a rational, moral being, but one who is possessed of the capacity of thinking, reasoning, comparing, judging, determining, choosing—one who has conscience and the affections—one who knows the law, and either obeys or disobeys it? But what is the use of his capacity for all this, if he is bound fast in the chains of fate, of absolute incompetency to deliver himself from its iron mandate?

"Not free, what proof could they have given sincere,
Of true allegiance, constant faith and love,
Where only what they needs must do, appeared,
Not what they would; what praise could they receive;
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,

When will and reason, (reason also is choice,)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me."

It is evident, then, that if rational, moral beings exist, they must be free. We are, therefore, reduced to the necessity of having the worlds which God has made, peopled with such beings, or with absolute slaves, having no thought, no volition, no feeling, with the infinitely holy, good, wise, and just God, reigning in solitary grandeur over his vast empire, the subjects of which are beings no better than stocks and stones. How could such be the subjects of law, of praise, of blame, of punishment or reward? How could the great Jehovah have communion with such, or take delight in them?

As creatures, rational beings are liable to change, and man has changed for the worse. Were these creatures mere machines, their failure would reflect dishonor upon the great God, and so impair his glory; but as rational beings, necessarily free to act as they please, their disobedience cannot be attended with such a result. And when this lapse from duty shall afford the occasion of honoring the justice of God, confirming his authority, proclaiming his mercy, and vindicating his character, then will it be seen that the glory of God will shine forth with brighter lustre.

My second remark is,

2. That, as a free agent, man has life and death set before him, with the liberty of choosing the one, and rejecting the other. As a fallen creature, he is an enemy to God, and without the provision of mercy in his Son, would forever remain such. Descending to the abode of the devil and his angels as a company of kindred spirits, he would forever unite with them in their unhallowed opposition to their common Creator. Mutual crimination and joint blasphemy against their Maker would render them as miserable as their capacity would admit. But now the announcement of pardon and restoration invites him to return. "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no

money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without price."

As moral agents, for whom there is hope, I call upon you, then, fellow sinners, to turn to the Lord. For thus saith the Lord: "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Your God commands, invites, entreats. Open your ears—hear "the word of his salvation, which is sent unto you." "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." As disobedient subjects, as prodigal sons, come back. Your Sovereign is ready to receive you; your father's arms and house are open to embrace and entertain you. Come, then, the fatted calf shall be killed for you; the best robe shall be put upon you, joy and gladness shall thrill through your ransomed, heaven-born souls. The church on earth shall rejoice. Attending angels shall bear the tidings to the throne of the Eternal, and the holy company of cherubim and seraphim in his presence, shall make all heaven resound with hallelujahs of praise to God and the Lamb.

But if ye refuse the invitations of love and mercy, and will not have the man Christ Jesus to reign over you; if ye will continue in sin, you must receive its wages—*death—eternal death*. You must see that man Christ Jesus on the judgment seat, and hear from his sacred lips the sentence—"Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But you will be your own destroyer; the Judge will only, as the organ of insulted justice and violated law, pronounce that sentence which you will have drawn down upon your own head.

Now, now, O fellow sinners, you have it in your power to place yourselves under influences that are spiritual and saving; or under influences that are carnal and damning. You can read the Bible, or the book of infidelity; the sermon of truth, or the novel of fiction; you can attend the party of sinful pleasure, or the meeting for holy prayer; you can go to the midnight revel, or to the house of God; you can lift up the prayer of the publican, or the howl of the bacchanal; you can utter the praise of the Most High, or belch out the blasphemy of the arch fiend. How solemn the responsibilities that are upon you! Under what awful

accountability does your free agency place you ! The freedom to choose is the freedom to reject. O ! exercise this freedom aright. Pause, consider your latter end. "Choose you this day whom you will serve. If the Lord be God, serve him; if Baal, serve him." Difficulties attend the decision. For their removal, search the scriptures, implore the teaching of that Holy Spirit, whom God will give to all that ask for him in sincerity. And Oh may he enlighten the eyes of your understanding, and give you to see Christ in the scriptures as your "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

My third and last remark is,

3. That the doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty is peculiarly suited to the condition of Christians in this state of things. It is the ground of their confidence. To its exercise, they owe all their present joy, all their hopes of future bliss. And now, "Beloved, build up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Let your freedom excite you always to a harmonious co-operation with the will of your gracious Sovereign. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure. And while thus earnestly engaged for yourselves, labor for the salvation of others also. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy—to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.—Amen !

WHAT DO THE SAYINGS OF JESUS CHRIST DEMAND?

A hearing.—That the preaching of the gospel is the divinely instituted means of conversion and salvation, intended to be made effectual through all time, appears almost unquestionable. The apostles spoke in terms of the highest commendation of the then "*written word*." "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope." But they also wrote substantially what they and our Lord preached: and this is now reiterated and enforced.

Is it asked, Of what avail is the speaker when we possess the documents themselves? We answer,

First. That there is a natural fitness in the thing itself, making the living ministry a requisite accompaniment of the inspired documents. Every argument for dispensing with oral instructors and heralds in religion, on the ground that we possess the Book, would equally dispense with colleges, academies, and all schools of learning for purposes of education, except those which merely teach the art of reading. Nay, further: he who denies the efficacy of speech in propagating religion would equally deny that speech is a blessing, except to the blind: for by letters and other signs, interchange of thought may be carried on with great success. But who does not know that there is an effect in the voice and the gesture which no words have been invented to produce? Thus also, "It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save those who believe."

Second. It is improbable that all persons be equally learned in divine things. All persons may be sufficiently so, to be *saved*, to be *happy*, to be *useful*. From the nature of things, some must be better qualified, both by natural endowments, opportunities for acquirements, and all their circumstances, to be, or to be made, teachers and rulers, than others. This is neither a cause for humility to the inferior, nor of pride to the superior. The pupil may in some respects be superior to the preceptor. It is no reflection on the advocate that he is not the judge, nor on the son that he is not the parent. And doubtless the man whose life is devoted to any pursuit is better qualified for it than others are, other things being equal. This is a reason, no doubt, why the gospel is provided with ministers. ED.

(To be continued.)

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PARENTAL OBLIGATION:

A Sermon, by REV. W. A. BAYNHAM, preached at Upper King & Queen church, King & Queen county, Virginia, on the 1st Lord's day in April, 1851, in the regular course of his ministry.

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"And ye fathers, bring them (your children) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Eph. vi: 4.
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In all the various relations of life, there are corresponding duties. Those of parents, my brethren, are of the very first moment; and with their due performance are connected the well-being and happiness of children. I would, therefore, present to you some reflections in order to stir up your minds to a consideration of the obligations imposed by this relation, that you may meet them faithfully, and reap the reward of your labor.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the subject, I would make only a single remark. In the text "*fathers*" are addressed; but *mothers* are not less included in the precept. Fathers throughout the scriptures are recognized as the heads of their households, and are held responsible. Hence they are addressed with respect to the rule and discipline of families. But the obligations of mothers, equally with those of fathers, result from the parental relation, and they are not at liberty to neglect the duties which *grow out* of this relation. I shall, therefore, address my remarks to *parents*, and not to *fathers* only.

We proceed now to the subject before us.

I. The text directs that children should be brought up.—
"Bring them up." This language clearly indicates that something is to be done *for* children. They are represented

as incompetent to the care and training of themselves. Some one must do for them what they are not capable of doing for themselves. This is a truth which needs no labored argument to prove or to enforce. It is matter of universal observation and experience. A child *cannot* safely be left to himself. He is the sport of every wind of sentiment and of every species of conduct, under whose influence he is brought. He does not possess the intellect trained to distinguish between the true and the false—the right and the wrong—the good and the evil. He may accidentally *fall* upon the right, but there is the greater probability and danger of his choosing the wrong. The child is like the polished tablet—the *rasa tabula*—upon which may be engraven whatsoever seemeth good to another—the blank sheet upon which may be written almost any thing—the clay in the hands of the potter to be made into any form—to receive any stamp. Place him among the moral and the refined, and he will become such—place him among the profane and vicious, and he soon becomes an adept in the language and the sentiment of his associates. And whilst this is true, yet there is known to be a *bias* to evil, and that the tendency to the adoption and the practice of evil is greater than to the reception and the pursuit of good. This exists in every *nature*. What is it but this that compels the *renewed* man to exercise a constant care and watchfulness over himself, even against the very first approaches of evil, lest he be overcome? And if this be true, as it undoubtedly is, that the proneness to evil is so strong in the man of God who has his tastes, feelings, aspirations refined and elevated by the Spirit of God, that he must not only be “instant in prayer,” but “watch thereunto with all perseverance,” what is to be expected but that the natural man will willingly and heartily yield himself up to what is pernicious—sinful? And if true of the man whose judgment has been matured, it is true also of the child who has an evil *nature* and is not prepared by instruction to correct the evil tendencies of this nature. Parents are fully sensible of this. They are anxious, therefore, that their children shall be preserved from those pernicious influences which they know must almost necessarily corrupt them. And let a parent’s course be ever so sinful, how desirous is he that his child shall be shielded from its sad effects! How, then, shall the

child with this bias, be preserved from the pernicious sentiments, practices and vices, which prevail about him? He must be either brought up by another, or left to himself to choose the good and to reject the evil—to select for himself the principles and laws of action. But in the heterogeneous mass out of which he is to make his selection, how can he determine? He is in the infancy of his intellect—he cannot discriminate—he is without experience and cannot learn from the past. He is incapable of judging—he must be *prepared* for it by a training—he must have *principles* of action established. These will be the living elements within, which shall check him in those motives to evil of whose workings he is conscious, and shall repel the insidious attacks from without. For any occupation of life, these are *essential*. Can he form them for himself? No, no. Some one must do it for him—guide him in the formation of the character within, that life may be honorable, or he will go on to ruin with rapid strides. If it must be done by another, who shall do it? We answer,

II. Parents. The text gives the reply. This is enforced by various considerations. Let us glance at some.

1st. Children are *gifts*. Gifts to *whom*? To their *parents*. And, I ask, if any gift does not carry along with it a corresponding duty or obligation? Every gift is a talent. An individual presents to another, say an estate. The obligation of gratitude, and also of a *proper* use of the estate, arises immediately upon the reception of it. And to whatever use any gift is by its nature applicable, it is a duty inseparable from its bestowment to apply it to that. This is a clear principle which, however practically denied, cannot but receive the sanction and hearty approbation of every one. A child is the gift of God to the parent, and his wants, his nature, his destiny, his well-being, all call for attention to him corresponding with these. In accordance with this is the command of God, “Train up a child,” “bring him up.”

2d. To heighten the obligation, as the parent is required to nurture, and train, and command, so there is the corresponding obligation resting likewise upon the authority of God, that the child shall obey—honor the parents. It is the law of Sinai—it is the law of Zion—the law of Christ; and how withering is the rebuke which our blessed Saviour

administered to the Pharisees for their violation of this law !

Again: This law sanctified by the authority of God both in the command to parents and in that to children, is fully maintained by the universal consent and approbation of mankind. The voice of society confirms it. What are the feelings excited towards that child who is disobedient? who does not honor his parents? Disobedience to parents is ever regarded as one of the very worst symptoms of depravity. All condemn him, who, forgetful of the claims of the parent, can lightly esteem the authority of one upon whom he is dependent for support and protection, and from whom he derives with his very being a tie that cannot be rashly severed or touched. And no less do they censure the parent who can neglect his child and leave him to the waywardness and recklessness of his own nature and the vicious influences of life. The fall and ruin of the child will be thrown back upon the parent. And I would ask if the parent does not, in such circumstances, acknowledge, in the secret of his soul, the justice of the sentence? The keenest pang that is felt in his heart at the crushing of his hopes and the blighted prospects of his child, is that which is occasioned by the thought that *he had not done his duty*. What were the feelings of Eli when he uttered those words, "it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good?" There is submission here, but there is a sorrow unallieviated by a good conscience. Oh! the very gall of bitterness in the cup which he drank to the dregs was in the words, "he restrained them not." His children did wickedly, and he restrained them not, therefore is this curse. We can perceive in the very language a difference between his feelings and those of Job in his afflictions. Job sanctified his sons and daughters, and offered burnt offerings according to their number, fearing lest his sons had sinned and cursed God in their hearts; and when his calamities came upon him, his language shows a deep sorrow; but it is grief assuaged by the thought that he had not forgotten his God in his kindness to his children. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus God and man, and your own consciences, all agree in the enforcement of this duty upon parents.

Again: The affections of both parent and child lead to the same conclusion. It is, my brethren, to our apprehen-

sion one of the wisest and most beautiful and lovely arrangements of God in his providence, that he has given to parent and child these strong affections towards each other. The power of love in animating and sustaining is well understood. How deep and abiding is that of the parent for the child! And we feel that it is this that bears the mother patiently, contentedly and happily, through all her care, toil and watchfulness. And is it not clear as the effects thus produced by its existence, that it was for this purpose this love was implanted? It is as peculiar in its nature as the duties are peculiar. And its natural *direction* is towards the fulfilment of the duties which belong to the relation. The parent experiences this very prompting of affection. It points to proper arrangements for the comfort, safety, protection of the child; and it is cheered by hopes bright and enchanting, that together give strength and energy to a spirit otherwise timid and wavering. And as with the parent so with the child. His affection is strong and enhances a thousand fold the obligations of the parent. Where does the child look for counsel? Whither does he flee for safety? Where is his confidence? Truth and every honorable feeling and action are, in the mind of the child, combined in the parent. His word is good in opposition to a thousand. And question the love of a parent, and the child answers by a look so confiding that we feel it is the irresistible eloquence of truthful nature. My Christian brethren and friends, it is enough to cause one to tremble at the heavy responsibility which this one simple truth impresses upon the parent. Have you the *hearts* of your children? Will you wither and blight those hearts by neglect? Do they look to you for truth? Will you ever permit them to look in vain, or to be deceived? Spare them the pain and suffering which an ill return or an ill example will occasion. Spare them the sad effects of being deceived, and perhaps concluding that all is false. Ye Christian parents, consider what consequences hang upon your temper, and conduct, and words. A child may not be able to understand and to believe the truths of the gospel, but he understands and believes in his parent; and when sitting by that parent's side, or resting upon the knee, he feels in his own heart the warm words that convey a parent's love to him, and hears from those lips that God hath given all this affection which is felt for him, and that

Jesus has made him or her the tender confiding one which he sees; he feels that there is a God who rules, and that there is something in the gift of Jesus. And perhaps he longs to know him; and whilst gazing intently in a parent's face, he asks, "Does Jesus love little children, too? and may they love him?" Then what force does your example give to the yes, which comes gushing up from tongue, and eye, and heart! But Oh! the contempt for that profession which is with lips, but reaches not to the heart, and thus influences not the life!

III. In what manner are parents to bring up their children? We have already said that the obligations must correspond with the nature of the gift, and the uses to which the gift may be applied. And we presume there will be no difference of opinion as to the assertion that the higher the use to which any thing is adapted, when the uses are various, the stronger the obligation with respect to that particular use or application. Various are the uses of property. One of these is to administer to the comfort of the possessor. But this is not its highest use; and he will rightly administer his means, who will make this subordinate to more noble purposes for which it is designed. If his comfort cannot be secured save by closing his eyes to the sufferings of poverty—honest poverty—around him, he must make the sacrifice of the former for the higher end of property—giving to the poor. Intellectual gifts have various uses. They may very properly be exercised in affording amusement and gratification to the social circle. But a higher use is the instruction and improvement of this circle in the cultivation of the social and moral affections. And other higher uses still belong to them. And we are ready to admit, that each lower use must be kept subordinate to that above it, and all to the highest. Its highest is the contemplation of God—his laws—his works—and a consecration to him; and all other purposes to which it may be applied, must be made subordinate and subservient to this.

Now what is the nature of that gift of which we have been speaking? A child is a compound unit. He has a physical, intellectual and moral nature, united in one compact whole. And when we consider the manner in which children are to be brought up, respect must be had to each of these. Each requires attention, and in the main, whilst

the proper development of one portion of this whole is secured, the development of the others is likewise promoted; or perhaps with more strictness, it might be affirmed that the individual is more favorably situated for the development of the others. Unhappily it has become necessary to separate moral and intellectual developments, when they ought to be one and undivided and indivisible. In the advancement of the intellectual man, there is not a necessary advance in the moral. The vices are too frequently rather increased than diminished, and yet the individual is *less loathsome*, but *more dangerous*, because his guilt is more refined. But with this unfortunate exception, it is true that the good of the whole man is promoted, when the good of any one distinct part of the man is promoted. Health of body renders the mind more active and vigorous, and the moral feelings less disturbed. Healthful moral action promotes health of body and of mind. The mind in its intellectual powers ought and should by its own action have a like beneficial effect upon body and mind. This, however, not being true in all cases, renders the reply to our question the more necessary, and we now return to it.

Your children, brethren, are destined to fill various and responsible stations in society. The offices of farmer, merchant, lawyer, physician, mechanic, minister, are to be occupied by them. In one and all of these they are to be honorable and respected for their virtues, or despicable for their follies and crimes. For any one of these callings, their powers are to be developed in order that they may be suited to their station. And every one of you desires and hopes that your child will be well fitted for the duty to which he may be called. How, then, will you bring him up? We answer emphatically in the words of the text, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Bring him up for God. God has made man for his glory; and the whole duty of man is comprised in this: "Fear God and keep his commandments." The first duty of every one is to God. His claims are above all others. Whatever else may claim attention, and there are many things which may and should be attended to, this is of paramount importance; and in its due observance, the others are embraced. If it be the duty of the parent to consider obedience to God his first duty, it is no less his duty to teach his child this and to prepare him for

it. Solomon desired his son's heart to be wise. * "And here it is that we must entreat you to observe what it was that the child was to acquire, in order that Solomon's heart might rejoice. Solomon was a great king, reigning over a mighty and prosperous people; but he was not so distinguished by the extent of dominion, or the vastness of wealth, as by his wisdom, his profound acquaintance with every department of knowledge. And what, then, was likely to have been uppermost in the desires of Solomon on behalf of his son, judging him, by what is common amongst ourselves, if not that he might be fitted to wield the same sceptre, to sit on the same throne, to sustain, or even amplify, the empire which had risen to such a pitch of renown? Or if the monarch had felt how far more precious and costly was the wisdom which drew round him an audience from the ends of the earth, than royalty with its most brilliant insignia, at least you would have expected him to desire for his son that universal science, that mastery over deep and secret things, that vast and comprehensive knowledge with which his name ever has been, and will continue, identified. And Solomon did desire wisdom for his son: Solomon did make his own happiness result, not from his son's being powerful, not from his being opulent, but from his being wise. But what wisdom did he crave for him? from what wisdom was he to draw gladness for himself? 'My son, if thine heart be wise.' Observe, we pray you, it is not 'if thine head be wise,' but 'if thine heart be wise.' And what is heart wisdom? Nay, it is that which was never acquired in the schools, which may be wanting where there is the largest possible acquaintance with what passess for science, and possessed where there is the greatest possible ignorance of all of which philosophy boasts, or attempts the scrutiny. Heart wisdom is religion: he alone is wise in heart whose heart has been operated upon by the Spirit of God, so that he discerns the superiority of eternal things to temporal, and sets himself in earnest to secure for himself happiness in a world beyond the grave. It were idle to apply the definition to any other cases; for no other kind of knowledge but the knowledge of God ever pretends to make its seat in the heart: every other avowedly addresses itself to the under-

* H. Melville—Sermon on Education—vol. 2, p. p. 65-6.

standing, and is satisfied in having the intellect devoted to its acquisition: but 'my son, give me thine heart,' is the address of God to every one of his rational creatures: and he may use the head as an avenue to the heart, yet is there nothing really done in religion till the heart has been carried; it is only in that inner shrine that there can be deposited 'the wisdom which is from above.' And you need only the slightest acquaintance with scripture, and especially with the book of Proverbs, to be aware that they only are spoken of as actually wise who are 'wise unto salvation;' no wisdom being thought worthy of the name which has not heaven for its origin and end, and the heart for its abode. There can, therefore, be no debate that what Solomon wished for, when wishing that his son might be wise in heart, was that this son might fear and love God; that whatever else he might want, he might be truly religious, a follower of those who professed and felt themselves strangers upon earth.

"But, alas! how different for the most part is the wish of parents, at least if that wish be gathered from their actions, rather than their words! Would it content most of us, would it gladden most of us, that our children gave promise of piety, if, at the same time, they gave little or no promise of ability? Is it an indication of their being 'wise in heart' which makes us thrill with pleasure? is it not rather an indication of their 'being wise in head?' We wish for them the dangerous, if not the fatal gift of intellectual endowment; we long that they should be able to carry off the prizes at school and at college; and, perhaps, if the truth must be told, it would not be without a pang of disappointment and regret that we heard of their being fond of the Bible, but unable to make way in Latin and Greek. Not that there is any need for depreciating or undervaluing intellectual ability and literary acquirement. They are choice things; and if a child show talent, and if he outrun his competitors, there is no reason why a parent should not be gratified and thankful; the talent is God's gift—a gift which God designed to be employed and improved; and certainly we are neither to lament nor conceal it, as though it were not fitted for admirable purposes; we are rather to cultivate and develope it as that which may be largely beneficial, and vastly promote the Divine glory. But at least it can hardly

be with unmixed pleasure that a right-minded parent marks the indications of ability in his child. What a perilous gift is talent! How likely to be wrongly directed! how sure, if it be, to work misery to its possessor, and to numbers besides! And even if well and successfully used, to what dangers does it expose! The eminence to which it may raise a man, is but a point from which he may fall—fall with greater force, and with less hope of recovery.

“Is, then, the want of talent in a child to be deplored so deeply? is the presence of it to be so admired? is that necessarily the flower, the hope of the family, who is all keenness and power, with mental grasp and mental retentiveness, which give promise of the first-rate classic, or the distinguished mathematician? Alas! alas! how often is the first-rate classic the elegant trifler, and the distinguished mathematician the captious sceptic! And better the idiot with his shut-up mind, his stifled understanding, than the clever youth who is too witty for seriousness, or too argumentative for belief. No, no; let talent have its due place; let us assign to learning its due worth; but let us not speak of ourselves as Christian parents, if our first wish for our children be not that they may be religious, if their being wise in heart make not up, in our estimate, for every other deficiency. And yet, perhaps, whilst there is not one of you who will not, in theory, assent to the justice of this decision, numbers of you know very well that it secretly condemns you. You are all alive to the indications of ability in your children; you are comparatively indifferent to the indications of piety. Well, then, compare yourselves with Solomon, Solomon, who was at least better fitted than any of us to judge, from experience, as to what in reality is most to be desired for a child. It may help to give a right direction to your wishes and endeavors, in the important matter of education—teaching you, not indeed to neglect the culture of talent, nor to despise the acquisition of knowledge, but to make every thing subordinate to your children being trained to remember their Creator in the days of their youth—to ponder the saying of Solomon, the opulent, the mighty, the learned; he speaks to his child with all earnestness, and with all affection; he urges his child by the love which a child should bear his parent; but he does not say, My son, if thou become rich, if thou gain worldly distinction, if thou

acquire great store of knowledge, then you will make me happy; he simply, (O Christian parents strive to do the same,) but pathetically exclaims, 'My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.' "

A child is an *immortal* being. An eternity is before him. When he begins life, he begins an eternity of existence. He shall die and his spirit return to the God who gave it. If he die in his infancy, he is safe—if he live to accountability and die, he *may* live with God forever, or he *may* be "driven from his presence and the glory of his power forever." This truth of itself is sufficient to render this position impregnable, and the duty resulting from it imperative. What will—what *can* soothe the bereaved parent's heart if he have not the comfort of a well-grounded hope that his child is happy? No sympathy, however endearing, and full, and sweet, can give relief. The spirit wanders in search of consolation, but finds none. And in the hour of sorrow, the parent would exchange all the honors that gather about him as a reward for his virtues and labors, for this hope. Suppose that he himself *doubts*, still his heart would take in the comfort and safety which the possession of a Christian's hope would warrant. Ah! does one doubt? Even that *doubt* must yield to the claims of affection. He does not *know* there is not a God who will judge—he does not *know* there is not a heaven and a hell—he does not *know* there is not an eternity; and if he *doubts*, in which scale shall affection throw the weight of its influence? Should it not be on the side of safety? Thus it is the skeptic's duty. But with the Christian there can be no hesitation. It should be the one great, first object and end of all the parent's endeavors, to bring up the child for God; and thus for his real existence, which is eternal. From the earliest period of the child's life, this should be the aim of the parent. It is a fact needing no enforcement or illustration, that he who would learn well should commence early; and if a parent would effectually train the moral and religious principles of the child, he should begin with the earliest period of life. Hence the Lord directs that the parent should "*begin at the mouth or entrance of the way.*" Thus the seeds of good are sown, and the seeds of evil rooted out. And whilst this is sought to be accomplished, the Bible—the book of God—should be the text-book. In the nursery, in the school-

room, and in the walls of the college, this book should be their companion—the fountain from which both parent and child should draw the refreshing, healing, healthful supplies. Away with that spirit and that false philosophy which would discard this wisdom from *any* school of instruction.

But it may be asked, do we not thus interfere with the great purposes of life? We answer, No. We thus better promote them. *The best Christian is the best man.* The more elevated the piety of one, the more exalted his character in every respect. Who amongst you, my brethren, has most weight of character? It is the man who is most consistent in his life as a Christian. He who fears God, acts under the influence of that truth, “Thou God seest me;” and in securing the favor of God by endeavoring to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man, he meets the claims of every relation, and presents a character whose integrity commands confidence. And we unhesitatingly declare, and fear no honest contradiction, that if a parent brings up his child for God, he in every respect best meets his obligations and the end of his child’s being. Let us look at a few points.

1. The child is made happy. There may be at first in the restraints put upon the child some uneasiness; but he soon learns the value of these, and that his happiness is increased. There is the better action of the better feelings of the heart, and the child is not unconscious of the sweetness of these. Happiness consists mainly in a conscience at ease; and this is possessed only as the virtues of the Bible are practiced.

2. He is better prepared for life. Even if learning be an object—and it should be—this course is most consistent with success. The truths of the Bible are the most interesting—the most sublime. Creation—man’s being—God—redemption—eternity—these are the truths presented to the mind in the Bible; and they tend to elevate and strengthen the mind. Besides, the moral precepts of the Bible, when received, have a direct and happy influence upon the mind. When received into the heart, they calm and compose, and the mind is better prepared to receive instruction—to investigate truth. “The entrance of thy words giveth light—it giveth understanding to the simple.” If one embraces this truth, he has a teacher above all others—the Holy Ghost.

But let the natural passions be at work, how they cloud the mind! Why *pride* will not permit a man to learn, because he obstinately determines that he will neither correct an error nor acquire a truth. Every other evil passion has the same effect.

3. The child is more honorable. True honor consists in *principle*. It is life which ever seeks the right and hides nothing for fear of losing caste—marked by every action that is consistent with the true dignity of man—life in which the opinions, feelings, character and rights of all men are respected—of choice—a spontaneous unforced regard to others. Religion—which is the practical influence of the truths of the Bible—is courtesy, amiability, benevolence, regard to the feelings of others, truth, honesty—every thing that is elevated, from the worship of God to the acknowledgment of a wrong done to another, in his character, feelings, rights and a reparation as far as lies in his power. It stoops to conquer, by no mean action, but by every honorable action. It is a good name; and valuing a good name above price, it shields from public gaze the faults of others, whilst in secret it seeks to correct those faults. The law of the Lord is perfect, and embraces precepts for any condition. It produces true civilization. Civilization is but regard to the rights, the feelings, the duties of man, in his associated capacity. And where is this found? It follows in the track of the Bible, and is seen in highest perfection where the Bible is best known. Broad is the commandment of God. Is truth demanded? “Lie not one to another.” God will have “truth in the inmost parts”—“speaking the truth in the heart” are scripture warrants. No *form* of truth—it is truth only embodied in words. Is honesty? Why one law of God followed out would render the intercourse of life truly pleasant and unattended by those distressing, humiliating scenes that constantly meet the eye. “Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.” With such a law as this guiding me, I could no more wrong my neighbor in his rights than I could deprive him of life. Is industry? It was the law of Eden; and “not slothful in business” is the universal law. The sluggard is directed to the ant. Read the 15th Psalm, and see what a true Christian is—read the 31st of Proverbs, and see what a Christian wife is. By bringing up a child for God, then you bring him up for happiness, for usefulness, for honor, for heaven.

IV. How shall this be accomplished? A few suggestions.

1. Cultivate the *affection* you bear your child. Love it ardently. But *love it truly*. Let this love be guided by prudence and discretion. The child is not a toy with which to be pleased for a moment and then thrown aside as useless. No, it is an immortal spirit, and it must in love be checked, and guided, and controlled.

2. *Begin* early and *persevere* in teaching and training. We have already said that the earliest period is the best to begin the work. But whilst some begin well, they soon grow wearied and reap not the fruits of their labor. It is no easy task, always to train a child. It needs study, toil, watchfulness, diligence, sacrifices of personal ease. The temper of the child is to be carefully studied, and the rule of action must be in accordance with it. One needs a check, another encouragement.

3. Be encouraged by God's word. The promise is, if a child be trained in the way he shall go, when he is old he will not depart from it. This promise of God stands sure; and it embraces much more, I believe, than is generally allowed. Does the promise relate only to life? Does it not also embrace the future existence? I must believe it includes this. The Bible is intended to prepare man for eternal happiness, and unless circumstances require a promise to be restricted to the present, it fairly belongs to the future. And there is nothing here thus to restrict it. It is needless to present examples in life against this view. A world of cases could not weaken the force of a single truth of God. And if these cases were well understood, it would be found that the rule had not been observed, and hence the blessing not secured. There has been a forfeiture of the blessing in the neglect of the duty.

4. Look to God for guidance and for his blessing. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." And the intercession of one for another is so clearly taught in God's word, that none need fear that they act presumptuously in asking the highest favors for their children. The centurion obtained relief for his servant—the woman of Canaan for her daughter—the friends for the paralytic.

Lastly. Be punctual. Let nothing interfere with this duty.

Act, my brethren, as you will wish you had acted when

either yourself or your children are brought to the grave. Begin, continue and end, all your efforts with respect to God, to fit your children for his service, and by prayer secure his help, and your reward shall be not only your own peace, but your children's good.—Amen.

WHAT DO THE SAYINGS OF JESUS CHRIST DEMAND?

(Continued.)

Third. Besides, it is not less the business of the ministry to *persuade* men to do what they do know, than to *teach* them what they do *not* know. Possibly not a hearer now present would say that his conversion was produced by means of any new truths disclosed to his mind, but rather by an *impression* upon his mind of what he *had before known*. The same remark applies to all our devotions. Our comfort does not arise from the ascertainment of new truths, but from the recollection and the cherishing of *old* and *known* truths. Hence the folly of everlastingly pursuing something *new* in religion. There is such an evil as moral gluttony; and such diseases as moral dyspepsia, and moral dropsy, and they produce moral death. As to crave uncommon things alone, or to delight in only one kind of food, indicates a vitiated appetite; so the soul which refuses to be nourished, but by food catered from every quarter of the world, is spiritually diseased.

2nd. *The performance*, or a doing of the things heard.

The gospel *brings blessings*, and *confers privileges*; but it *requires obedience*. “Obedient unto the faith,” and “for the obedience of faith,” are common expressions with the apostles.—Acts vi: 7; Rom. i: 5, xvi: 26. And against those who disobey the gospel, heaven's most awful anathemas are hurled. “The Lord Jesus will take vengeance on them who know not God, and who obey not the gospel.”—2 Thess. i: 8. “If judgment first begin at us, what shall the end be of them, who obey not the gospel?—1 Pet. iv: 17.

But, under this head, there are two remarks of vital importance:

First. That obedience begins in the heart—that no external acts can avail while the moral man remains unsubdued.

This is the strong tower, the citadel—all other positions are mere out-posts, the relinquishment of which amounts to nothing.

Second. That it must be universal—including all the divine requisitions. Every thing in the Old Testament, not abolished in the New; and every thing in the New, must be regarded. There are conditions without which, Divine favors are not to be bestowed. Even when there is no tendency in the prescribed means to secure the end sought, those means must be employed. If the Syrian General had persisted in his haughty refusal to wash in the Jordan, although the waters could not cure the disease, he must have died of his leprosy.—2 Kings v. If the blind man had refused to wash in the pool of Siloam, although his eyes had been anointed by the omnipotent Saviour, his lips had not confidently uttered the words, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.”—Jno. ix. Neither expediency, nor humanity, nor the voice of the people, could apologize for Saul in sparing the cattle and the king of the Amalekites. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” So Saul “went up to his house,” and “Agag was hewn in pieces with an axe.”—1 Sam. xv. But if obedience is thus essential in cases in which there is no natural connection between the means and the end, what shall we say of it, when the end without the means, is, from its own nature, impossible? If the wounded Israelite, who refused to look at the brazen serpent died, much more cannot the sinner be saved, who will not believe in Christ.

Dr. Scott has a pertinent note on this: “In no particular is the difference between the hypocrite and the true Christian, more manifest than in this; that the one has some Agag—some master sin which he will spare, while the other levels his force against that very predominant sin, and hews it down as with an axe.”

ED.

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THE TRADITION OF MEN, VERSUS THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD:

A sermon before the Baptist Convention of North Carolina, held in Wilmington, Oct. 1851, by REV. WILLIAM HOOPER, D. D., of that State. Published by request of the Convention.

Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; for, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.—Mark vii: 7, 8.

That a religion which came down from heaven should lose a portion of its purity, and contract some defilement upon its entrance into such a world as this, was as much to be expected as that the mountain snow should suffer a diminution of its lustre from the touch of earthly hands. Human ignorance and human presumption would both ensure such a deterioration. Man's mind, darkened and besotted by sin, would inevitably invest this celestial production with the mists of its own atmosphere, so that it should appear different from the reality; and his conceit of his own wisdom would be sure to make him think he could mend that which did not accord with his own notions of perfection. And thus the corruption of religion is coëval with the fall of the human race; for Cain, the first-born man of the second generation, offered a less excellent sacrifice than Abel, because he departed from the divine instructions and sought out inventions of his own.

Our Saviour's reproof to the pharisees and scribes, a part of which we have chosen as our text, gives us a painful exhibition of the degree to which this corruption of religion had proceeded since the era of its proclamation from Mount Sinai.

The text asserts:—

I. 'That the commandment of God is the only authorized standard of duty in matters of worship.

II. That the rulers of the church did, in the time of Christ's appearance on earth, substitute for God's commandments the traditions of men.

III. That they thereby rendered their worship vain.

First, then, let us consider the reasonableness and certainty of the doctrine, that the commandment of God is the only authorized standard of duty in matters of worship.

The worship of God, when it is genuine and sincere, is the result and the indication of the deepest and most serious feelings of the soul. The real worshiper does not come to God to trifle. He is in earnest. He wants something which he *must* have, and which God alone can give. He therefore feels an anxious concern to know what will promote the success of his application; in other words, how he may worship God acceptably. How will he find out this? Is the light of nature sufficient to teach him how to approach God? I think we are warranted by scripture in saying that the light of nature, if properly used, would give men such ideas of the character of God as would lead them to such devout sentiments and such a mode of worship as God would approve and accept; and therefore, that having this light to guide them, "they are without excuse," for falling into the monstrous absurdities and follies which belong to all the false religions of the world. The prophet Isaiah draws a picture of idolatry, in which he makes it appear so ridiculous, so debasing, and so disgraceful in a reasonable creature, that it would seem he meant to stir up the idolater to laugh at and be ashamed of his own senselessness and stupidity:—"He planteth an ash and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn, for he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god and worshipeth; he maketh a graven image and falleth down thereto, he burneth part thereof in the fire, with part thereof he eateth flesh, he roasteth roast and is satisfied, yea he warmeth himself and saith: Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image, he falleth down unto it, and worshipeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith: 'Deliver me, for thou art

my God.' And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge or understanding to say: I have burned part of it in the fire, yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof, I have roasted flesh and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?" (Isaiah xlv: 14-19.)

Such stupidity and folly as this, the prophet considers unworthy of human nature, and a disgrace to the reason and dignity of man. He evidently takes for granted that man's common sense is sufficient, if properly used, to protect him from such debasing superstition, and to lead him to more suitable notions of God. With this accords the doctrine of the apostle in the epistle to the Romans. "The wrath of God," says he, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, (even his eternal power and godhead,) are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; so that they are without excuse." It is because the adorable character of God can be "clearly seen from the things that he has made," that the inspired writer pronounces idolaters to be without excuse, and that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them." There would be no wrath of God against them, if their ignorance and superstition were not voluntary. I think we may safely take for granted that there is between God and every rational being whom he has created, such a secret correspondence and communication as will enable God to justify himself to the conscience of every such being, when he condemns him, for choosing false gods in preference to the one living and true God. But although the light of nature, if duly improved and attended to, would guide men to rational and acceptable worship, it is certain that owing to the depravity of the heart, they have not liked to retain God in their knowledge, but have abandoned him for multitudes of base gods, which their own imaginations invented. That this departure from truth and reason in matters of religion was not owing to a deficiency of intellect so much as to perverseness and pride, we may learn from the remark of the apostle, that "professing themselves to be wise they became fools," and from the fact that the Egyptians, the Greeks,

and the Romans, the most intelligent of ancient nations, and whose wisdom in every thing but religion has been the admiration of all succeeding ages—yea these were as gross idolaters as any of the barbarians around them; nay, it has been found that the nations nearer to the Holy Land, though far inferior to these more intellectual nations in other things, were in point of religion more rational and less debased. This has been plausibly accounted for by their proximity to the Jews, from whom it is likely some rays of light emanated by which the surrounding nations were profited.

But after all allowances for what men could know and do by the light of nature, if they would use that light properly, this does not make it less necessary or less gracious in God to help them with additional light and strength, when they have so sadly injured their eye sight and their strength by sin. If then, God, in pity to man, interposes with a revelation to lead him back from his wanderings and mistakes, and teaches him plainly how he would have him to worship and serve him, then man's duty is clear. He is no longer left to his own conjectures. He must no longer grope by the twilight when he has the beams of the risen sun to guide him. He is cut off from inventions of his own, when God has laid down the rule and the model. What presumption and impiety would it have been in Moses to have gone and made the Tabernacle according to his own notions, after having received the strict charge: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount!"

As long as man was left to judge of God's will by the language of the firmament above his head, and of the earth under his feet, and by the voice within him, it was his duty to strain all the powers of his soul to interpret aright that language and that voice. But the indistinct and ambiguous language of God's *works* must hush their "uncertain sounds," when God himself speaks. A servant left on his master's estate without instructions how to proceed in his master's absence, would do well to endeavor to ascertain his master's designs and wishes by the general arrangements and preparations he had made; and guessing these intentions as well as he could by his own sagacity, if he prosecuted them to the best of his ability, he would discharge his duty and his master would forgive any involuntary mistakes. But quite different would be the case if the master had left *expli-*

cit directions for his proceedings. Then, suppose that servant should say: "My master, to be sure, has told me expressly what he wishes me to do; but I will take the liberty of departing from his plan a little. I think this field can be cultivated to more advantage in another way. The house he gave me a plan for building, I am of opinion, will be more commodious if such and such alterations are made. I will try my own way, and no doubt he will be pleased with my zeal for his interests, when he sees I have exercised my best judgment in fulfilling his purposes." Now, what should we all say to the reasonings and conduct of such a servant? Why, that he was guilty of great audacity in setting aside his master's expressed will for his own conjectures, and that he deserved punishment rather than praise.

So God having put man to the test, and proved that, if left to the light of nature, he would "change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," and even descend lower than that, change it into an image made "like unto birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things," God having tested this by a full experiment, comes from behind the curtain of nature and speaks audibly to man. Holy men are moved by the Holy Ghost to deliver a message from God declaring how he would be worshiped. Man's inventions must now stop. His choice of modes of honoring God is put to an end. His sagacious conjectures, as to what will please God best, are now not only unnecessary but presumptuous and even impious. All he has to do is, to sit at the feet of his divine teacher, learn his will and do it. This evident duty God inculcated upon his ancient people again and again, charging them most solemnly not to wander from his directions, by following their own foolish imaginations, or the example of the surrounding nations.

Secondly. But notwithstanding these solemn injunctions, armed with the most terrible threatenings, and enforced by the severest judgments, the Jews gradually changed and corrupted the religion taught them from heaven, until it was completely buried under the mass of their own inventions and traditions, and thereby not only failed to be a safe and correct guide to the people, but actually furnished them with the means of evading the plainest duties, and the most weighty commandments of God. If you would see speci-

mens of these corruptions, read them as set forth and rebuked by Christ in the 5th and 23rd chapters of Matthew. Take an instance or two:

1. The law had enjoined that children should support their aged and helpless parents. But the Pharisees had taught the people in Christ's time, that by dedicating to a sacred use some part of their property, they might say they had nothing to spare for the wants of their parents, and were thenceforward exempted from the duty of maintaining them.

2. The law had said, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The Pharisees had made this comment on it: "You are under obligations to love none but one that lives near you, and others you may hate as much as you please." How vast a difference there was between this narrow, exclusive religion, and the expansive benevolence of the gospel, the divine Saviour showed in the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan, where a foreigner and a national enemy treats a Jew who had been left on the road robbed and wounded by highwaymen, with the tenderness and sympathy of a brother.

3. Again the law had said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." We have reason to believe from Christ's contrasting *his* teaching with that of the popular teachers before his time, that the people were led to believe that if they avoided the *external act*, there was no criminality in the inward desire or intention. Christ, however, shows them that God looked upon the lustful eye, and the secret impurity of the heart, as already involving a breach of the commandment.

4. Again, the Pharisees taught that if a man swore by the temple, his oath was not binding, but if he swore by the gold of the temple, then he was bound by his oath.

By such wicked and ridiculous distinctions, did they blind and mislead the people, whose guides and examples they were appointed to be, and thereby merited and received the thunder of Christ's most terrible rebukes.

Now, you will notice, that the authors of these inventions and traditions, whereby the commandments of God were suppressed and made void, were the rulers and officers of the church, the priests and scribes—to whom the people were to look up for truth in doctrine, and models in practice. Yet, if we are to believe some modern teachers, the people are

quite safe so long as they will surrender themselves to the guidance of the clergy, and not dare to follow their own judgment and consciences in the interpretation of scripture. The truth is, the only security for minister or people holding fast the truth, is that they should be well versed in the scriptures. Then the minister cannot impose *false* doctrine upon his flock; they have an infallible authority to appeal to. But he has an immense advantage in enforcing *true* doctrine upon the consciences of his hearers, when they are well informed in God's word. For he has their understandings and their consciences *both*, on his side, when he can appeal to their own personal knowledge, that "thus saith the Lord."

In the time of our Saviour's appearance on earth, the rulers of the church had, as we have seen, set aside the precepts of God's law for their own traditions, and thus cheated the people of their spiritual food, feeding them on *ashes*, and not on bread. And that consequence followed which might have been expected. The corruption of doctrine led to the depravation of morals. It is the depravity of the heart that first leads to the corruption of sound doctrine, and then that corrupt doctrine sanctions and increases the depravity of the heart. Of the deep wickedness of the priests and scribes, we may judge from the unsparing severity of Christ's descriptions of them, and maledictions upon them. That heart so tender to the penitent and distressed—those lips so gentle and gracious in delivering the gospel message to all that had ears to hear—that heart and those lips are armed with the sternest and most dreadful severity towards these corrupters of the faith—these misleaders of the people. He calls them whited sepulchres, fair *without*, but *within* nothing but rottenness and stench. He calls them a brood of deadly vipers: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!" Never did such awful language proceed from the Saviour's mouth towards any other human beings; which shews us that their guilt was transcendently great, and that the judge of quick and dead regards no set of men with more anger and abhorrence than those who are placed to teach his people, and instead of leading them aright, lead them astray, to their ruin. What a solemn feeling ought this to bring over us all, my brother ministers! What a dread responsibility rests upon us! We are accustomed to look over the countries given up for ages to the

soul-destroying errors of popery, and while we pity the millions of the ignorant, superstitious laity, we lay the chief blame upon the priesthood, who keep them in ignorance, and owe their power and influence to that ignorance. And are we Protestants very sure that we are free from errors? Do we study and pray over the Scriptures, being exceedingly afraid lest we should, through ignorance, prejudice, party spirit, or worldly interests, mistake or pervert the meaning of the inspired text, and thereby endanger our own souls, and incur the dreadful guilt of destroying the souls of, we know not how many of our fellow-creatures! All who are acquainted with the history of the church from the apostolic age down to the present time, must know the constant tendency that men have shown to alter, add to, and take away from, the doctrines delivered by God's inspired ambassadors. Even under the very eye and authority of the apostles, we find the work of degeneracy commencing and requiring their constant vigilance and strong remonstrances. But after their removal from the guardianship of the churches, we might expect a more rapid degeneracy. And so alas! it happened.

Take up any Ecclesiastical History; Mosheim, Milner, Neander. They show you what changes the church underwent in every century, both in doctrine and practice. You observe with pain, even in the 2nd century some departures from apostolic purity. In the 3rd century still greater. In the 4th century the Roman Emperor took the church into alliance with the State, and ever after that, the church showed the malignant influence of this unholy union. She forsook her heavenly bridegroom and formed an adulterous connection with the lords of this world, and the fruits were such as might have been expected. Imperial favor did more harm to Christ's spouse than imperial rage. The successors of the simple and poor fishermen of Galilee became bishops of extensive and rich dioceses, and over these rose the archbishops still higher, and over these the patriarchs, ruling with a still wider sway. Worldly riches, ease and power, became the inheritance of the church; and these brought on greater and greater corruptions of doctrine and life and manners. The darkness thickened as the northern barbarians overran the Roman empire, and extinguished the ancient civilization of the countries which they occupied. The clergy were the only possessors of learning, and therefore, had the power of

palming upon the people whatever they pleased as the commandments of God. And by the time fifteen centuries had rolled around, to what a condition they had brought the religion of Christ is familiar to all of you who have read any account of the great Reformation in the 16th century. The load of human additions to the simple spiritual creed taught by Christ and his immediate followers, had become so hideous and oppressive, that when the man of God, Martin Luther, determined to shake it off from his own shoulders, the groaning church was ready to follow his example; hailed him as her deliverer, cast off the galling yoke, and exulted in her newly recovered right "to call no man master upon earth but Christ." But was it to be expected that one man would accomplish the complete purification of religion from the mass of rubbish and rust that it had accumulated through centuries of ignorance and wickedness? No; it was to be expected that Luther, enlightened and God-fearing as he was, would be in some measure under the influence of old inveterate prejudices, and would not, all at once, see into the whole scheme of truth. Accordingly we find him maintaining most fiercely and intolerantly the doctrine of *consubstantiation*, a doctrine as absurd and incredible as the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, which he rejected. Indeed, the Romish doctrine is, perhaps, encumbered with less difficulty than the Lutheran one. For the Romanist puts the tenet entirely on the ground of miracle, and confesses it to be incomprehensible. Whereas, Luther thought it absurd and impossible that the bread and wine should be transformed into flesh and blood, while it still appears to the senses to be bread and wine. And yet he thought that the words of Christ, "this is my body," compelled him to believe that the flesh and blood of Christ actually entered into union, and were incorporated with the sacramental elements. And he likened it to *red hot iron*, where, though the original iron remained, the fire had insinuated itself into all its veins, and become a part of the mass.

Now, it seems strange to us, that so feeble an argument, or rather so inadequate an illustration, should have imposed upon and satisfied the vigorous and independent mind of the Saxon reformer. For it was obvious to reply, that all our senses contradict the *union* of the two substances in the sacramental bread and wine, as strongly as they do the entire

transformation of the one into the other; and if we are obliged to receive one or the other, it is easier to reconcile the understanding to swallow the Romish doctrine, as a matter of faith too deep for reason, than to swallow the Lutheran doctrine, as consistent with reason: when it is as utterly condemned by reason as the other. Yet, this strange conceit of his own, Luther maintained with as stubborn a dogmatism as if it had been ever so rational, and he had no toleration or charity for his brother reformers of the Swiss school, who could not receive it. The tenacity with which Luther clung to this relic of the old superstition, we know was owing to his reverential submission to the word of Christ, who, holding the bread and wine in his hands, had said "this is my body;" "this is my blood." That was enough for Luther. His senses said: "this is bread and wine as much after consecration as before." He was obliged to believe his Saviour, and yet it was impossible to disbelieve his *senses*. So, to reconcile the two, he contrived an *intermediate* doctrine between faith and reason, unsatisfactory to both. In vain his brethren, Zuinglius and his followers, offered so easy a solution of the difficulty, by interpreting Christ's words *figuratively*, as all Christians do when he calls himself a *door*, a *shepherd*, a *vine*, &c., and when he calls his disciples *vine-branches* and *sheep*. Can we wonder then, when we see the honest heart and daring spirit of Luther, who was ready to face all the kings and priests of the earth in defence of the truth of God—when we see, I say, his honest heart and intrepid spirit enslaved by old habit and long prejudice, in this particular—can we wonder if those who went ahead of Luther in purging the Lord's supper of superstitious accompaniments, should themselves have retained some remains of error, and if those remains should have cleaved to the church to this day? Let us look well to ourselves. Let us feel a godly jealousy and fear lest *we* may, from education and from reverence for our ancestors be cherishing fondly, some darling error, as if it were delivered to us from heaven. Are we wiser and better men than Luther, and Calvin, and Zuingle, and Beza, and Melancthon, and Bucer, and others (the most learned and pious men of any age), who spent their lives in the laborious and prayerful study of the word of God, and who would have cheerfully sealed their testimony with their blood, if God had called them to the trial?

No; we are *not* wiser and better men. “There were giants in the earth in those days,” and we are dwarfs in comparison. We owe our exemption from their errors to our remoteness from the age of Popish domination. *We* have drawn our first breath in a Protestant land—been taught the Bible from infancy—never read a Popish book—never heard a Popish sermon. *They* were born, nursed and bred in the lap of Popery. How then could we expect their complete emancipation from its fetters! These good men, these great men, with the exception of Luther, believed it to be the duty of the magistrate to put to death heretics. And poor Calvin’s name, to this day, is loaded with the great infamy of having had the Socinian, Servetus, prosecuted, and burned alive by the magistrates of Geneva! Yet Calvin did nothing but what the best of his contemporaries approved, and would have done themselves, had the opportunity offered. Indeed, they all, (Luther, so far as I can find out, being the only exception,) they all considered the teaching of heresy as by so much more worthy of death than common murder, as the killing of the *soul* is a greater crime than the killing of the *body*. As a proof of this, Melancthon, the meek, the amiable Philip Melancthon—the most tender and gentle spirit of those stormy times—he after hearing of the burning of Servetus, wrote a letter of congratulation to Calvin on the occasion, applauding the deed! And the eminently pious Bishop Hall of England, who had the advantage of living half a century later, and of being brought up in a Protestant church, and who himself wrote a treatise on *moderation*, in favor of the Sectaries—even this man says: “Master Calvin did well approve himself to God’s church, in bringing Servetus to the stake at Geneva!!!”

Are you my hearers astonished at this? and are you indignant at the blindness and cruelty of these great men? Lay it to the age in which they lived, and their having received this bloody doctrine handed down to them from their cruel mother, seated on the Seven Hills! Instead of upbraiding *them*, let us thank God that *we* were born in more enlightened times. *We* owe our spirit of toleration, not to our superior sagacity, or goodness, but to our more commanding position, “as a dwarf on a mountain will see farther than a giant in a valley.”*

*Matthew Henry.

Though happily exempted from these great mistakes of our forefathers, the church may still have clinging to her some taint of her bad education—some tincture of the muddy stream that flowed into the pure current of the river of life, after the Apostles. As Baptists, we must be forgiven by our brethren of other denominations, whom for their purity of doctrine in other respects, their holiness of life, and their eminent services to our common faith, we greatly honor and dearly love—I say, we must be forgiven by them, if we are obliged to consider the tenet of infant baptism as post-apostolic; and therefore, “the tradition of men, and not the commandment of God.” We can see no trace of it in scripture. On the contrary, we can see it *excluded*, because at the very time when Christ ordained baptism as the badge of discipleship, he required faith and discipleship. *Voluntary enlistment first, before wearing the badge of a soldier.* And we are confirmed in our interpretation of Christ’s word by seeing the practice of the apostles conformed to the command of their Lord.

“It is certain,” says Neander, one of the latest and best Ecclesiastical historians, and himself belonging to a pedobaptist church, “that Christ did not ordain infant baptism; he left, indeed, much which was not needful for salvation to the free development of the Christian spirit.” And again, he says, “we cannot prove that the *apostles* ordained infant baptism from those places where the baptism of a whole family is mentioned; because the inquiry is still to be made, whether there were any children in those families of such an age that they were not capable of any intelligent reception of Christianity, for this is the only point on which the case turns.—Vol. 1, p. 198, Rose’s Translation.”

Such is the testimony of the late Neander, of Berlin, a historian whose praise is in all the churches, and (from the accounts that we have of him from American travelers, who have become acquainted with him,) a man as profoundly humble and pious, as he was profoundly learned. And it does seem to me, that if we could only look at the matter, free from the influence of education and church interests, and judge of this question dispassionately, as we do a question of Grecian or Roman antiquities, the evidence would be entirely satisfactory, that Neander is right. The only case of house-

hold baptism mentioned without its being expressly stated, either there or elsewhere, that the household were believers, is the case of Lydia, and surely, by all the laws of fair interpretation, that ought to be interpreted by the rest—to say nothing of the improbability that Lydia, a traveling merchant from Thyatira, a distant city of Asia, merely sojourning at Philippi, for the purpose of trading in merchandize—the improbability that she would have young children of her household. It seems to me utterly incredible that when there are so many cases of baptism in the Acts of the Apostles, there should not be recorded *one*, presenting a scene like that which occurs constantly in modern times, of parents bringing up their children and presenting them to the minister to be baptized—if infant baptism had been practiced by the apostles. But I did not intend to go into the argument here. I would rather kindly and solemnly ask my brother Christians who baptize infants, whether the evidence is sufficient to justify them to their Judge when he cometh with his holy angels to take cognizance of the deeds of men. The *Baptist* feels that *he* stands on sure grounds in this matter. *His* directions to baptize *believing men and women*, are plain and unmistakeable, and confirmed by the repeated examples of the apostles. But, if by possibility, he has not seen the full extent of his commission, and has witholden from infants a rite to which *they*, as well as adults, were entitled, he can plead with a perfect heart before his judge, that he could not see, in his judge's instructions, the least warrant for applying that ordinance to any but believers.*

*I am persuaded that many embrace and profess doctrines whose soundness and truth they have never thoroughly examined, and whose foundation they *feel* to be suspicious, because these doctrines compose a part and parcel of the "Confession of Faith," acknowledged by their church. They feel satisfied they are right as to fundamentals and essentials, and if peradventure they should be in error as to matters not vital, not endangering salvation, they will be forgiven, and the damage to them will not be as great as would result from relinquishing old and forming new church connections. They, therefore, satisfy their minds and appease their consciences with the usual arguments on their side of the question, not plaguing themselves to pursue the probabilities on the other side, which might lead to uncomfortable doubts. Of the justice of this charge we have a striking testimony in the confession of the Rev. Baptist Noel, of London, whose late coming over from an elevated station in the church of England to a connexion with the Baptists, is an instance of independence of mind and heroic self-denial, worthy the days

But suppose the advocates of this practice should tell us to judge by the fruits. "Look at the excellent consequences of dedicating children in infancy to God! How conscientious it makes people in bringing up their children!" I have no objection to Christian parents dedicating their infant offspring to God. Every Christian parent does it in his private and family devotions. And if pedo-baptist parents are more conscientious than Baptist parents in "bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," let *us* take shame to ourselves, and follow their better example in this good thing; but not imitate them in an uncommanded ceremony. But if we are called upon to admit the divine appointment of infant baptism from its supposed good fruits, we are able to point to fruits of the most noxious kind, growing out of this tenet and practice. What doctrine has de-

of Martyrdom.* "During my ministry in the Establishment," says he, "an indefinite fear of the conclusions at which I might arrive, led me to avoid the study of the question of baptism." As this was the case with such a man, so long distinguished for talents and piety and abundant labors in the service of Christ, we might, without breach of charity, suspect it to be the case with many others, even if his confession were not corroborated, as it is, by similar confessions of others, who forced by irresistible truth, have broken the strongest earthly ties, and sacrificed the dearest earthly interests in connecting themselves with the society of Baptists. Surely, in forming our religious opinions, even where the decision is not considered as jeoparding our salvation, we ought fairly to weigh evidence, and to be governed by the preponderance of probability.

Were each inquirer on the subject of baptism to ask himself which way he would decide if his salvation was dependent on the issue, I must believe that hundreds more besides those already alluded to, would step off their own upon Baptist ground, as the safer of the two, and shaking least under the feet. But, however, a *private* Christian may quiet himself by leaving the question unexamined, because he deems it non-essential, methinks a *minister* ought to feel strong misgivings when he undertakes, from anything he finds in his New Testament, to teach and inculcate the doctrine of infant sprinkling, and when consulted by tender and troubled consciences, to prevail upon them that there is no truth or reason in their scruples. Oh let him ponder those words: "Whosoever shall break *one* of these *least* commandments, and shall *teach* men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven!"

*For one of the proud aristocracy of England, the son of a peeress, the brother of an Earl, the chaplain of Queen Victoria, who might have looked forward to the first vacant bishoprick, and to be called "My lord,"—for him to break through all the barriers which family pride, church bigotry, and worldly interest threw in his way, and to unite himself with any sect of dissenters, is one of those rare instances of the magnanimous sacrifice of everything earthly, for the sake of God and truth, which here and there illuminate the dark track of human history, and serve as a refreshing object for the eye to repose upon, like a rainbow on the face of a cloud.

ceived more souls to their extreme danger, if not to their destruction, than the doctrine of baptismal regeneration! In this declaration, Methodists, Presbyterians, and even the low church Episcopalians, heartily agree with us. Yet this doctrine is the natural and legitimate product of infant baptism. One error propagates another. Because Christ said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" men assuming without sufficient grounds, that he of course here alluded to *baptism of water* as well as *regeneration by the Spirit*, thence groundlessly inferred, because Christ mentioned them together, that they must necessarily be simultaneous. Whereas, nothing can be clearer from the whole tenor of scripture, than that the soul is first baptized of the Holy Ghost, if the profession be sincere, and then water baptism is enjoined upon the new convert, as the emblem and outward index of the inward washing *previously* received. It was because Saul of Tarsus was previously regenerated by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that he was exhorted by Ananias to "arise and be baptized" in water. It was because Peter, while he was preaching to the family of Cornelius, saw and heard manifest and unmistakeable signs of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, that he thought no man could forbid water to persons thus stamped with heaven's approval. But as soon as men interpreted Christ's words rigidly to mean, that no one (child or adult) could be saved without water baptism,* why, then of course, parents would wish, and ministers would urge, that *children* be baptized. And now, that outward rite which before was the *sequel*, and the *visible declaration* of the *inward* grace *previously* bestowed, came to be considered as the inseparable accompaniment of regeneration, and even the necessary instrument of conveying that grace to the soul. No sooner were these words of Christ in the 3rd chapter of John, supposed to assert that *baptism* was essential to salvation, than those other words of Christ in

* Wall, in his elaborate work in defence of Infant Baptism, shows, by numerous quotations from the Fathers of the first four centuries, that they all believed that children could not be saved dying unbaptized; some held that they would be annihilated; others, that they would go to a neutral place of neither happiness nor misery, while Augustine, the greatest authority among the Fathers, held that unbaptized infants would be damned!

the 6th of John, "except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you," were understood to declare that *the Lord's supper* was essential to salvation. Accordingly, the Lord's supper was administered to infants and to dying persons, as the necessary passport to heaven. And there is as good historical evidence of the early existence of infant *communion*, as there is of infant *baptism*. The great Chillingworth himself, though an Episcopalian, makes this statement.* And I hesitate not to assert, that not a single argument can be urged for infant baptism, which cannot be urged with equal force for infant communion. We say then, receive both, or reject both. Baptists are sometimes called cruel to children for denying them baptism; as if they were depriving them of Christ's blessing, like the mistaken apostles, who rebuked those that brought infants to receive Christ's benediction. Might we not reply, that if this be, as we verily believe, a perversion of the ordinance, by the invention of men, then *you*, who apply an *uncommanded* ceremony to your infant children, you are the cruel ones. You take an expressive sacrament of Jesus Christ, significantly exhibiting to the believer his professed death unto sin and resurrection to holiness, you take it from your child when he could *understand* it, and *appreciate* it, and be *edified* by it, and bestow it upon him when he knows not what you are doing to him, and therefore, has no share in, and no responsibility for it. Is not this as if a parent, from weak fondness for his child, should spend a part of his child's fortune in decorating his infant body with costly ornaments, thus impoverishing him of the goods he ought to have reserved for him till his years of discretion?

But if *parents* incur God's displeasure by diverting his ordinance into an illegitimate channel, what is to be said of ministers who not only do it themselves, but "teach men so?" Let them not say it is a *slight* matter, even if they are mistaken. Let them remember their Master's solemn declaration: "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and *shall teach men so*, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven!"†

* Chillingworth's Works, pp. 54, 214, American edition.

† When I consider how many points of union and harmony there are between the Presbyterians and Baptists—how we rest on the same foun-

Thirdly. Our text declares that if we lay aside the commandment of God, and hold to the tradition of men, then we “worship him in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” How seriously then ought every teacher of religion to search the scriptures, and pray for guidance, lest he frustrate and nullify his religious services, and lead others into the same error and mischief! When we think of the worship of God, what a pure and exalted employment it is—when we contemplate the solemn and august spectacle of the whole of Christendom, pouring forth by myriads on the sacred day, to repair to their several places of adoration, how important does it appear that they all come in the way appointed by himself; that they offend not his

dation and can use (bating baptism) the same Confession of Faith—how we feed on “the same spiritual meat, and the same spiritual drink,” *we* devouring the rich marrow of their Baxters, their Henrys, their Doddridges, their Wattses, and their Chalmerses; their Edwardses, their Witherspoons, and their Dwights; * and *they* repaying themselves from the precious treasures of our Bunyan, our Booth, our Foster, and our Hall, and (may I not add) of our Wayland and our Williams—I cannot but deeply lament that one post-apostolic ceremony (if I may call it so without offence) should keep those asunder who otherwise would, like kindred drops, have melted into one. Let *them* give up this doctrine, this little favorite of theirs, a child “born out of due time,” (“Is it not a *little* one?”) and let them propose what *we* shall sacrifice on the other part, and peradventure, we may strike a bargain, and then *elective affinities* will soon find out congenial associates, and a closer and dearer union will be formed between such men as Brainerd and Judson, Carey and Moffatt, than between Baptists Missionary and Anti-missionary; between Baptists-catholic and Baptists-bigoted. Surely, this is no time for fraternal discord. Surely, all those who love Christ and his truth ought now to endeavor to draw nearer one another, when there has been, in a sister church, so large a defection from Protestant principles and practice, and an addition of their strength and influence to the Romish cause. Almost whenever I step into one of our sister Protestant churches, I delight to see the people receiving the same precious bread of life from the hands of the minister, proving that notwithstanding our differences, we are all co-operating in the grand, main design of gaining souls to Christ, and showing how cautious we should be, lest, in contending, as we sometimes are obliged to do, for our respective peculiarities, we mar our own work, by infusing the venom of party hatred into the breasts of the disciples.

* I make no apology for the inaccuracy of classing under the general name of Presbyterians, Independents, and Congregationalists; because they not only symbolize in cardinal doctrines, but even in church government, they are so little tenacious, that they are easily incorporated together when circumstances throw them into juxta-position—at least the latter make no difficulty in submitting to Presbyterian jurisdiction.

tremendous majesty by presumptuous inventions of their own, by vicious intermixtures of what is human with what is divine, of what is earthly and sensual with what is spiritual and heavenly. And when we consider what a train of the most precious blessings proceeds from the worship of God, if that worship is according to his will and direction, how solicitous ought we to be that we do not deprive ourselves of these immense benefits, by offering to our Maker, instead of the oblation of "the upright heart and pure," the ceremonies of prostration and genuflexion, and heartless prayers and anthems—things which, if separated from a devout spirit, become absolutely odious to God by their hypocrisy. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me; the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear."

And now brethren, it remains that I close this discourse with a few important inferences. Is it our happiness and our glory that our churches are constituted on Bible principles?—that our doctrines, our devotions, our forms and ceremonies, are all scriptural, evangelical, profitable and edifying? Then there are larger claims on the Baptist church to be eminently holy in heart, and zealous in good works, than on any church in the world. Unquestionably the *sincere* (that is, the pure unmixed) word of God, is more nutritious, more fitted for man "to grow thereby," than the same word when diluted by puerile ceremonies, or poisoned by serious errors. When we cast our eyes around the churches of Christendom, we can witness and watch the heart-corrupting and life-impairing influences of unsound doctrine. We can see ceremonial deadness, bodily penances, slavish superstition, moral flagitiousness and jesuitical craft, growing naturally and necessarily, in the Romish church, on the stock of merit of works, auricular confession, priestly absolution, celibacy of the clergy, transubstantiation, and similar inventions of men; and those who are saved, "saved as by fire," grop-

ing darkling, and with pain, their way to heaven,* through the mists and the rubbish, which have been thrown upon the path of pilgrims, by those whose appointed office it was to sweep clean and enlighten that path. And when we gladly escape from that *Italian* coast, where dismal *malaria* holds its constant reign, and come over into the sweet, healthful atmosphere, of our beloved Protestantism, there too, we seem to detect the pernicious tendencies of some departures from "the faith once delivered to the saints," and of cleaving to patristic traditions. We see the doctrines of union with the State, of apostolical succession, of infant baptism, of the real presence, of absolution—giving rise, in England, to a worldly clergy, to supercilious contempt for all dissenters; and in both that and this country, leading to the unchurching of the whole family of Protestants, non-episcopally baptized and ordained—to regeneration received in unconscious infancy, and carried in the soul latent and inert—to a superstitious veneration for the eucharistic bread and wine—to an over-valuation of the church and priesthood, so that the soul leans on these rather than on Christ—to Mariolatry†—to a passion for crosses, and crucifixes, and images, and church drapery, and all the trumpery of the middle ages, which the Herculean hands of Luther,‡ Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and

* Witness the sublime intellect and seraphic piety of *Pascal*, not protecting him from the superstitious practice of wearing a girdle armed with nails, which, upon every evil thought, were pressed into the flesh!

† If any one will look into the Roman Catholic books of devotion, he will see the Virgin Mary so put in the place of the Father and the Son, that it is no misnomer or slander to call the members of that church Mariolaters, i. e. worshipers of Mary. We here charge Protestants no farther with a tendency to slide into this sin than as they follow the authority of the Fathers. As soon as Puseyism began to revive a veneration for the Fathers of the first four centuries, Mariolatry began to show its head.

‡ Would it be believed that in this age, and in the face of the enlightened Protestantism of this country, and in contempt of the XI and XII Articles of his own church, "The Churchman," a leading high church paper of New York, would have ventured to rail openly against the doctrine of "justification by faith," that fundamental and capital article of our common creed, and to call it a Lutheran innovation! Whereas, all well-informed persons know that it was enforced upon the reluctant mind of the Saxon Reformer, when he sought the truth in agony and tears, in the writings of Paul; enforced, I say, because, in spite of edu-

their peers, dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel, and for a return to which, madness is the only, and sometimes the *avowed* excuse.*

Freed from all these impediments to your progress in holiness, to your comfort and purity of mind, with Christ alone for your companion, your counsellor, your dictator,—what should hinder you, dear brethren, from being the lights of the world and the salt of the earth? And I humbly trust, that the Baptist church has in some good degree fulfilled her high destiny, as a faithful “witness for the truth,” in the most trying times and circumstances. While our prominent writers† have done so much for the church and for the world,

cational prejudices, and the whole architecture of meritorious doing and observances, to which he was wedded from his youth, he could not help seeing this glorious doctrine shining as a sunbeam in all the pages of the great apostle—like the *aureus ramus*, the golden bough, revealing itself amid the leaves of the forest to the Trojan chief, under the conduct of the Sibyl. Such an article I saw in “The Churchman,” some years ago, when the Oxford Tract Controversy was at its height in this country. Whether such has been the ordinary teaching of that journal, I am unable to say; but certainly the increased attention and importance given of late years to crosses, and altars, and church fixtures, and vestments—is an ominous sign that Luther did not attach too much weight to that Pauline doctrine—that where it prevails and flourishes, these trifles will wither and die away from the soil of the church, but immediately reappear and shoot up luxuriantly when that doctrine is obscured or opposed.

* See Bishop Ives's Letter of Recantation, addressed to the late Convention at Fayetteville, N. C.

† In giving John Bunyan alone, to the world, the Baptist church may be said to have laid the public under the deepest obligations. This old father of our church “deserves double honor,” not only from the Baptists, but from all who honor the truth and patient suffering for that truth's sake; “since unto him it was given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake.” If dead worthies could feel any increase of joy in their heavenly abodes, surely the spirit of Bunyan would be indemnified for the contempt and injuries of his own generation, by the lavish homage of the present. If the humble tinker of Bedford could revisit our earth, he would be almost smothered under the profusion of his laurels. What would be his amazement to read the splendid eulogy of Macaulay on his homely allegories, and his still more homely *style*! How would his humble mind be abashed at seeing himself placed on the same bench of merit with Milton, and to read in the first critic of the age that towering compliment: “During the latter half of the 17th century there were only two great creative minds. One of these minds produced the *Paradise Lost*;

by their genius and eloquence, and are among the foremost names in theology and literature, the large mass of our people, drawn from the humbler ranks of life, have walked with God in private, harmless and useful, performing their duties and bearing, their trials, as becometh saints.

At the same time our English Baptists had the honor of first rousing the spirit of missions in Great Britain, and commencing the great errand of mercy to eastern Asia. Our American Baptists, with laudable zeal, have followed in their luminous track, and connected their names forever with the salvation of the heathen.

But while we contemplate these labors and achievements of our brethren with honest exultation, we have to confess,

the other the Pilgrim's Progress!" How would the good man wonder to see the Poet Laureate of England, and one of the most celebrated authors in the world, editing his Memoirs, and the most fashionable booksellers laying all the fine arts under contribution to send forth into the world, in a volume superb enough to adorn the boudoir of a Queen, that product of his mind which came forth from the jail of Bedford, a squalid manuscript, blotted with the tears and fanned by the sighs of twelve years' imprisonment!

Though it may swell this note to an unreasonable length, I must indulge myself and my readers, in the gratification of giving "honor to whom honor is due," by adding to the above praises of this eminent servant of God, an extract from a late work, Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chief Justices of England*. In his life of Sir Matthew Hale, who wished, but could not release poor Bunyan from the grasp of the cruel law which threw him into prison, the noble author thus reconciles us to Bunyan's hard fate: "Little do we know what is for our permanent good. Had Bunyan been then discharged and allowed to enjoy liberty, he no doubt would have returned to his trade, filling up his intervals of leisure with field-preaching; his name would not have survived his own generation, and he would have done little for the religious improvement of mankind. The prison doors were shut upon him for twelve years. Being cut off from the external world, he communed with his own soul; and inspired by Him who touched Elijah's* hallowed lips with fire, he composed the noblest of allegories, the merit of which was first discovered by the lowly, but which is now lauded by the most refined critics; and which has done more to awaken piety, and to enforce the precepts of Christian morality than all the sermons that have been published by all the prelates of the Anglican church."—(Vol. 1, page 561, London edition.)

* Read "Isaiah's." Lords seem peculiarly liable to unlucky mistakes when referring to the characters in the Bible. It is not long since I read somewhere, that the great Lord Eldon, in one of his public speeches, called the Roman Emperor, "Julian the *Apostle*," instead of Julian the *Apostate*!! In the present case the oversight was the less excusable, because his lordship quoted from Pope's "Messiah," which he ought to have had by heart from his youth.

that as a body of Christians, we fall far below our duties and our privileges—that many calling themselves Baptists, have forgotten the expressive ordinance by which they professed a burial to sin, and a resurrection to righteousness, and by their covetousness and immorality, have brought disgrace on their church. It is no pleasure to contemplate or expose to view the wounds and ulcers of our denomination; but such a contemplation may do us good by humbling the pride which we might be disposed to feel at the correctness and purity of our creed. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” said our Master and our Judge; and in vain shall we claim to be better friends of the truth than others, if we “hold the truth in unrighteousness.” Matthew Henry, the celebrated commentator on the Bible, says in his pointed manner: “The worst of all men is a bad Christian, and the worst of all Christians is a bad minister.” May I not borrow the expression with a little variation, and say: The worst of all men is a bad Christian, and the worst of all Christians is a bad Baptist, because no clouds of human inventions intercept from his view the beams of truth, but they are ever pouring upon him their full radiance and vital warmth. But the ditch of error lies close along side the path of truth, and it requires wary and circumspect walking to avoid falling therein. The doctrine of free grace, has from the days of the apostles, been perverted into the doctrine of antinomianism. Because God has declared he will not impute their trespasses unto believers, it was argued, that the law is not binding upon believers as a rule of life, and that as they are exempted from its penalties, they are exempted from its precepts. Fatal, pernicious error! Paul saw the leaven working during his life-time, and he tried to shame it out of countenance, by exclaiming with pious horror: “What! shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? * God forbid! how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein!” Peter saw it working, and stigmatized those who “wrested” his brother Paul’s doctrines to their own destruction. James saw it working, and wrote his epistle to teach these wretched antinomians, that “faith without works is dead.” John saw it working, and therefore, with paternal solicitude, cautioned his readers against these seducers: “Little children, let no man deceive you; he that committeth sin is of the devil.” And lastly: Jude saw it working, when he warned the church

against "certain men who had crept into it unawares, ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness."

Yet, with all these forewarnings, it cannot be concealed that antinomianism has prevailed to a lamentable extent in our churches, and the effect has been like a frost in May upon the fair gardens—all verdure blighted and shrivelled up. The mischief was rife in the days of Andrew Fuller, and caused him to take the serpent in his powerful grasp and strangle it.*

* We caution any pedobaptist who may honor us with a perusal of these pages, against a mistake into which he may fall here. The mischievous evils of covetousness and antinomianism, and others not less so, are no less common among pedobaptists than Baptists. Would to God they were: but they are not. Besides, these constitute no part of our tenets, and are of very partial influence: whereas the dogma Infant Baptism, with its countless, fatal consequences, is universal, with the single exception of Baptists, and is the basis of a system, whose field is whole nations, and whose influence would drive Christendom, despite of pedobaptist sincerity and goodness, into infidelity and worldliness, were it not for the antagonistic influence of Baptist principles. The history of the world and of the church proves it. Hence, no pedobaptist may intelligently and honestly put covetousness and antinomianism among Baptists, as an offset to traditions among pedobaptists, and balance accounts with us. It is the object of Dr. Hooper, while he ably, respectfully, eloquently, affectionately, condemns the inventions of men in religion, to caution his own brethren against the imperfections incident to fallen humanity. There certainly is a wide difference between error fallen into, *notwithstanding* one's religion; and error, even that same error, practiced as a *part* of that religion. There is not probably a Baptist on earth who would admit that *he* is perfect; yet every Baptist will maintain that his *religion* is perfect: because he believes it to be the religion of the New Testament. Impatience, indolence, and over-attachment to the world, are faults, any one of which may attach to an individual Baptist; but no Baptist, and certainly not the denomination, teaches this as part of religion. One of our complaints against our pedobaptist brethren of all sects, is, that they teach as a part of religion, and a fundamental part, tenets which even their own greatest men admit to be tradition, not revelation. The eminent Dr. Chalmers says: "We doubt not that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostles' days, was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water; and yet he maintains that sprinkling and immersion are "indifferent." Doddridge, Wesley, Clarke, Campbell, Whitby, Luther, Calvin, Stuart, all our distinguished opponents, make similar concessions as to the subject and the action: and yet refuse to do what conscience not only permits, but demands, and condemn us for submitting to her authority. So numerous and potent are the authorities of pedobaptists against themselves, that were we writing a book on our own side, we should not think of quoting any Baptist writer, with perhaps the exception of Dr. Carson,

While we deplore, my dear brethren, this pestilent error, calculated above all others, to bring not only our own society, but the Christian religion itself, into contempt and abhorrence with the world; it ought to be a matter of serious examination, whether any fault in our ministry, or in our discipline, has favored the growth of the evil. Have not our preachers dealt too little in pointing out the connection between a sound faith and a holy life? Have they preached sufficiently on the absolute duty of abounding in good works as the only satisfactory evidence of being real Christians? Have they been faithful in teaching their converts that water-baptism is nothing but condemnation to them, unless accompanied with the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Have they inculcated sufficiently, that none are saved from wrath who are not saved from sin, and that Christ justifies and glorifies none but those whom he sanctifies.

It is painful to remark in many of our churches such glaring inconsistency—such zeal for one commandment, and such carelessness about others—such fierce contention for baptism, and such indifference about “the weightier matters of the law.” A heart devoted to the world, absorbed in making money, and refusing to support the ministry and missions, is as offensive to God, as is the fashionable trifler, taken up with the amusements and gaieties of life. Our people are generally severe enough in condemning the last, but many of them are themselves melancholy specimens of the first. Now he that said: “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,” also said, “the covetous man is an idolator,” and “they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.” He that appointed the

indisputably one of the greatest philologists of any age or country. What would the whole world say of any political party, against whom the concessions of their own leaders, acting contrary to their declared convictions, were the amplest refutation? It would pronounce the whole party dupes, and the leaders knaves. No other sentence would be possible. Now we do not say this of our religious brethren of other persuasions: but that they are vulnerable here, as elsewhere, is indisputable. Another important distinction regarded throughout by the learned, talented and amiable author of this discourse, is that which exists between the systems of men, and the men themselves. While for the latter he manifests the tenderest affection, he has no sympathy with their traditions.—EDITOR.

ministry for the edification of the church, said, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," and "the laborer is worthy of his meat." Yet how large a portion of our people are willing to do without ministers rather than support them; suffering them to remove to other places, or yielding them so grudging, and so penurious a salary, that they are obliged to engage in schools, and merchandize, and farms, and all manner of secularizing avocations, to keep themselves and their families, from absolute want and debt. Have such Baptists ever read the 9th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and do they really believe it to be a part of God's declared will? If so, is it not as obligatory on the conscience as baptism, and with what face can a Baptist be astonished and indignant at a pedo-baptist, for not yielding to the plain instruction of the Bible, on the last point, if he is totally negligent of the first point?

If then, dear brethren, we value ourselves on our close adherence to the divine word, let us cleanse away these blots and inconsistencies, and show a *universal*, and not a *partial* attachment, to the precepts of the Bible. If we wish to make converts to our faith, and additions to our churches, and such converts as are worth having, we must attract them by goodness, and by love. We must show them a people pure in morals, and heavenly in walk and temper. If we want them to follow us, we must let them see that we are a "peculiar people," not like the world, that our joys and our treasures are above, and that "pilgrims and strangers on earth, we are seeking a better country, even a heavenly." Happily, our churches are not composed of the rich and great ones of this world.* There are, therefore, no tempta-

* Unhappily many persons judge of religious questions as they do matters of mere taste, refinement, or secular interest; and not of conscience and moral government alone. They select a church as they do a social circle; and a religious creed as they do one in politics, manners, or fashion. For ourselves we frankly avow, that we do not admit the arrogant, presumptuous, haughty, impertinent, assertions and insinuations of some pedobaptists, that Baptists are, in other matters than religion, inferior to their pedobaptist brethren. We never have discovered any tendency in Infant Baptism to elevate, refine, or enrich men; or in Believers' Baptism to degrade, roughen, or impoverish. Besides, the avenues of wealth, learning, and power, are equally open to all. And were it not so, surely in religion, if in naught else, we might, from the expected retributions of the great day, if from no other motive, submit in this one thing to the authority of conscience and the word of God.—Ed.

tions to allure into our ranks the worldly-minded—those who are ambitious of consorting with the opulent, and the splendid and the fashionable—proselytes who weaken and pollute, instead of strengthening the church to which they attach themselves. Let this be the charm which shall draw souls to our bosom, such souls as will prove a prop, and an honor, and a comfort to our churches. When the poor worldling, awakened from his dream of enjoyments, sick with disappointment, and troubled with a guilty conscience, shall look around for some place of repose to his weary soul, and enquire where peace is to be found, let his anxious eye light upon a community with heaven's stamp upon them—humble, quiet, sober, patient, loving, blameless, kind, useful, rejoicing in God, and in the hopes of glory. Let this inquirer after salvation see a people thus distinguished and thus attractive, and with melting heart and eyes he will throw himself into their arms, exclaiming:

People of the living God,
I have sought the world around,
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found.

Now to you my spirit turns—
Turns, a fugitive unblest;
Brethren, where your altar burns,
O, receive me into rest.

Lonely I no longer roam,
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave.

Mine the God whom you adore;
Your Redeemer shall be mine;
Earth can fill my soul no more;
Every idol I resign.

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JUSTIFICATION:

A Sermon, by REV. C. R. HENDRICKSON, of North Carolina.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God; through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. vi: 1.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone, is vital to Christianity; and therefore vital to our salvation. Correct views upon all other theological subjects, if indeed possible without this, may be rendered worse than useless by ignorance as to how God can “be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Error here is fundamental and fatal. Such was Luther’s estimate of this doctrine, that he styled it “the article of a standing or falling church;” because practical or experimental piety will flourish or decline in a church, just in proportion as the views of it which prevail are true or false. Faithfully and earnestly preached by the Reformers, this doctrine became “mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds” of antichrist, and in awakening to a new religious life, thousands of the spiritually dead on the continent of Europe. It is the vital element of Protestantism; the life-blood of Christianity; the hope of a guilty world.

But this doctrine, always deemed by those “of whom the world was not worthy,” a fundamental truth of the gospel, is boldly denied by some and ridiculed by others. Another gospel is preached in not a few pulpits that have heretofore “contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” Ordinances which can be apprehended and enjoyed only by the spiritually renewed, are thrust out of their proper position, and made terms of salvation, in obedience to

which the guilty may receive “the remission of sins.” Instead of being the beautiful emblems of our spiritual renovation—of sins washed away by atoning blood and of a resurrection to a new life, they are made “the medium” through which we pass from a state of condemnation to the enjoyment of the favor of God.

The introduction of such sentiments into some of our churches, and the corresponding repudiation of the doctrines of grace, always held sacred by our denomination, should lead us to hold the truth with a more vigorous grasp, and to guard against being “carried about with divers and strange doctrines.” It is not my intention to notice at length the errors to which I have alluded; but, if possible, to strengthen your convictions of the truth of a doctrine which is itself the best antidote to all such heresies.

I invite your attention to THE NATURE, GROUNDS, CONDITION and EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION.

I. THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION.

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. “It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?” It means acquittal: a declaration of a person’s righteousness. It denotes not a change of nature, but a change of state in relation to the law. In the book of Deuteronomy (xxv: 1,) we read thus: “If there be a controversy among men, and they come into judgment that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.” In this passage, to justify does not mean to make righteous; but to pronounce the person righteous on proof of his innocence. In the New Testament the word has the same meaning. When “wisdom” is said to be “justified of her children,” the meaning is, that she is approved or vindicated; she is exhibited in her true character, and cleared from the charges of her enemies. The man who strives to justify himself, is one who is anxious to prove that his conduct is not defective. The Pharisees were of this class. Hence the Saviour said, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men.” They declared themselves righteous. It is unnecessary to multiply quotations, as it is evident from the uniform use of this term by the sacred writers, that it denotes a relative change—a change of legal standing, and not of moral nature. Those who are justified are regenerated, but the two blessings,

though existing in the same person at the same time, are distinct in nature and design.

The person justified is a sinner. *"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly."*—Rom. iv: 5. The act of justification includes two things: 1. That the sentence of condemnation is repealed. 2. That the person justified is entitled to the blessings of a loyal subject of government. The pardon of sin, or the repeal of the sentence of condemnation, consists in delivering the sinner from the penalty of the law. This is the nature of pardon, both in divine and human governments. The pardoned sinner is no more liable to suffer the penalty of the law, than if he had not transgressed. Hence, the Scriptures employ a variety of metaphorical expressions to show that the guilt of sin is completely cancelled, and that no penal evil can befall those who have found "forgiveness with God." Their "sins are blotted out;" their "transgressions are covered;" are "cast into the depths of the sea;" are "remembered no more;" are so hidden as not to be found by the most diligent search. Now these expressions cannot be understood as teaching that the sins of the justified actually pass from the omniscience of God; but simply that they shall no longer be the occasion of condemnation, or subject those who have been guilty of them to the punishment they deserve. They are delivered from the "curse of the law." They may now say, "O Lord, we will praise thee; though thou hast been angry with us, yet thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted us."—Isaiah xii: 1.

But "the remission of sin" is not the only blessing included in justification. Although an offender were fully pardoned, yet, if nothing more were done, he would have no claims to the privileges and immunities which are enjoyed by faithful subjects of government. It is necessary, therefore, that the sinner should not only be delivered from guilt, or the liability to punishment, but that he should, on some proper ground, be restored to the Divine favor, and treated as though he were positively righteous. That the justified sinner is treated in this manner, is evident from the declarations of the apostle Paul. Says he, *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works."*—Rom. iv: 6. *"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be*

made righteous.”—Rom. v: 19. The idea expressed here is not that the sinner is pardoned only—that he is delivered from “the curse of the law;” but that he is approved, is accounted righteous, though “without works.” But as he has not fulfilled the demands of the law, as he has no personal righteousness, the question arises how can he be treated by a Being of perfect rectitude, as though he had? To this question we have an answer in the words just quoted: “*By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*” “*The Lord imputeth righteousness without works.*” That is, though the sinner is “without works of righteousness,” yet he is treated by God as righteous, on account of having imputed or made over to him the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We give an illustration: A creditor holds you responsible for the payment of a debt, but on your inability to pay, a friend steps forward and pays it for you; therefore, you stand in relation to the creditor, and are treated by him, as though you had paid the debt yourself. This illustration is imperfect I know; it is true, however, that God for Christ’s sake—in view of what he has done and suffered for us—not only forgives our sins, but treats us as worthy of his favor; not worthy in ourselves, but worthy in Christ our surety. The apostle mentions both as included in justification when he says, “*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into the grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*”—Rom. v: 12. The same truth is taught by Paul when making his noble defence before Agrippa: “*They may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified, by faith that is in me.*”—Acts xxvi: 18. Such is the nature of justification.

This brings us to notice—

II. THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION.

The justification of the sinner must be founded either on his own personal righteousness, or upon the righteousness of another. The question is, to which of these is he indebted for the remission of sins and acceptance with God?

1. First, as to his own righteousness. The apostle declares, and proves by unanswerable argument, that “*by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified.*” “*They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*” A plainer truth is not found in the Bible.

Permit me to dwell a moment on this point.

1st. Man has sinned. This is a fact established by the express declarations of the Scriptures, and also by the consciousness of every man. Therefore, having sinned and come short of the glory of God, his present conduct, however dutiful, cannot atone for past disobedience. He is under obligation every moment of his existence to render a perfect obedience to the law of God; therefore, if he should commit but one sin during his entire moral history, there is an absolute impossibility of his cancelling that one act of disobedience. He can perform no act of supererogation, the merit of which may be applied to such a purpose. Besides, there is no such merit attached to obedience as to be accepted as an equivalent or compensation for acts of rebellion against the throne and monarchy of heaven. They do not balance each other. The man that burns down his neighbor's dwelling, cannot repair the injury he has done by being kind and just ever afterwards. Neither can the sinner satisfy the claims of God's outraged government, by striving henceforth to "magnify the law and make it honorable." God demands satisfaction for the past. That demand man cannot meet and live. His mouth is stopped; for he stands guilty before God.

That the sinner cannot "be justified by the deeds of the law," is proved by another fact.

2nd. Man in his present depraved condition cannot fulfil the demands of the law. "*They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*"

But here we meet an objection. How can man be under obligation to meet the demands of the law, when he has not the ability? The objection arises from taking a wrong view of man. Man at present is a sinner as well as a creature; and as such he cannot perform the duties which were obligatory upon him in his sinless state. But if man is fallen and incapable of rendering the obedience of his sinless state, should not God lower his demands, and adapt them to his condition? The loss of power and means by the unfaithfulness of a steward, imposes no obligations on his Lord to lower his demands.

Now, when man came forth from the hands of his Maker, a pure and upright creature, he was endowed with every power and with ample means to meet all the demands of his

Almighty Sovereign; but by voluntary transgression he has darkened his understanding, impaired the delicate sense of conscience, and filled his mind with enmity against God. He is the willing "captive of the devil." He is "dead in trespasses and sins." His heart is "deceitful above all things," and desperately wicked." He cannot, therefore, now serve God as when with unblighted heart he sung the anthems of Eden, and bowed the knee before the Majesty of the universe, unconscious of a fault. Still, God has not lowered his demands, to meet the condition of his fallen creature; but holds him responsible for the performance of every duty that was obligatory upon him in his original state. The claims of God are founded in the nature of things; they are eternal and immutable; not affected by the loyalty or rebellion of his creatures. The character of God had as strong claims upon the supreme love of Judas Iscariot, as upon that of Adam before he took the forbidden fruit; though in the latter case the heart gratefully ascended to God, while in the former it revolted from him.

I know that this doctrine is often misrepresented and derided by flippant pulpit declaimers; but no declamation, no boisterous appeals to the clouded judgment or depraved passions of the heart, can destroy the fact, THAT MORAL IMPOTENCE AND MORAL OBLIGATION ARE CONSISTENT WITH EACH OTHER. And every man's conscience will exclaim in view of this: "Just and true are thy ways, Lord God Almighty!" Had God made man a sinner, or created him without power to meet his demands, the case would have been essentially different; but as it is "there is no unrighteousness with God."

But to guard against all misapprehension, I wish to state as distinctly as possible, that by moral inability to keep the law of God perfectly, I mean that man is without the disposition or inclination to keep it; in other words, that he cherishes a positive aversion to it, or hatred of it. It is this aversion to the law of God that makes man so guilty, and which clothes the vengeance of heaven with such appalling terrors.

But to return to an illustration suggested above: Though you cannot be insensible of the gross indignity to which you have been exposed, and the wrong you have suffered by the unfaithfulness of a steward, yet, upon the intercession of a third person, you offer to forgive his offence, restore him to

your favor, and to furnish him with means to re-enter your service; but he indignantly turns from you, dislikes the third party for his interposition, and pleads the excuse that he is unable to serve you. Now upon such conduct, you would at once conclude that he had no disposition to serve you; that he cherished a deep-seated dislike to you; that his inability was nothing more nor less than an unconquerable unwillingness. You would also know, that while that state of mind remained unchanged, it would be absolutely impossible for its possessor to love you, or obey you, or be profitable to you. So it is with the sinner. Though he has cast indignity upon the majesty of God, violated the laws of his moral government, and exposed himself to the just displeasure of his insulted Lawgiver; yet, in view of the satisfaction and intercession of his well-beloved Son, God offers to pardon his rebellion, invites him into his service by the most impressive considerations, promises strength in his weakness, and grace in his need. But the sinner makes light of the offer of mercy; he hates Christ without a cause; he abhors the cross as much as he despises the law. "*He will not come unto Christ that he may have life.*" Now what is this but a disinclination to the service of God? But this disinclination or "enmity against God," the only inability that the sinner can plead, instead of justifying him in his rejection of the love and service of God, greatly aggravates his guilt, and will add intensity to his anguish in hell. Now if man is so depraved as to cherish a uniform hatred to the law of God, which is "holy, just and good;" if he is so much under the dominion of sin, that *he cannot come unto Christ except the Father draw him*; if he has such a preference for darkness that *he will not come to the light*; is it not evident that he never can be justified by the law, which requires constant and unwavering obedience?

Another consideration proves the impossibility of justification by the law.

3rd. The law makes no provision for justification, except on the ground of perfect obedience. The law justifies those who have never sinned. Had man remained righteous, he would have been justified by law. The unfallen angels are justified by the law which they have kept. But a broken law knows not but condemnation. "*Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the*

law to do them." "*The soul that sinneth shall die.*" "*The wrath of God abideth upon him.*" "*The wages of sin is death.*" This consideration destroys all hope of the justification of the sinner, on the ground of personal righteousness. The law is against him. Its claims can never be relaxed. No bribery can reverse its sentence, or delay its doom. "*The law worketh wrath.*"—Rom. iv: 15.

If then the sinner is "condemned already;" if he cannot "be justified by the deeds of the law," the question arises, "how can man be just with God?" The apostle answers, Jesus "*was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in (more correctly FOR) us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"—Rom. viii: 4.

We now advance to another point.

2. The righteousness of Christ is the only ground of the sinner's justification.

Says the text, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Says the same apostle, in another chapter, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare I say at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." To the Philippians the apostle expresses his desire to "be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."—ch. 3: 9. "He is made unto us righteousness." It is unnecessary to quote similar passages. Having no righteousness of our own, we are indebted to that of the Lord Jesus Christ for justification.

1st. What is the righteousness of Christ? I answer, that it is the perfect conformity of Christ, as the surety of man, to all the demands of the law. He who was God over all and blessed forever, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person; voluntarily humbled himself, was born of a woman, was made under the law, that he

might condemn sin in the flesh, and redeem those that were under the law, by enduring its curse in their stead. He magnified the law, and made it honorable in the eyes of the intelligent universe. He acknowledged its comprehensive claims. Such was his regard for it, that he kept it entire without setting aside as impracticable or improper one point. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He was "Jesus Christ *the righteous*." He was "God with us," subject to law. Never before had the law such a subject; never before did its majesty appear so glorious. Heretofore the law had been conformed to its Author, it was the reflection of his image, the expression of his will, but now the Author comes under his own law, and shows by his conformity to all its requisitions, that its excellence is infinite.

I proceed to remark that—

2nd. The law was honored, and the character of God vindicated by the sufferings of Christ. "It behoved Christ to suffer." There was a moral necessity for it. The first representative of the human race had aimed a blow at the authority of the Supreme and Eternal Sovereign, that shook the moral universe to its centre. The second representative, the Lord from heaven, appeared to atone for the wrong. He had no excuse to offer for the deed of rebellion. He could ask no relaxation of the claims of the law; no mitigation of its severity. The stability and welfare of God's moral government required the infliction of the penalty. The truth, holiness and righteousness of the King Eternal, demanded immediate vindication. To accomplish the gracious designs of "the Everlasting Father" towards guilty rebels, to display his unsearchable riches, to reveal himself as never before, in his infinite compassion, he gave his only Son, that he might suffer and die, under the stroke of divine justice. The object was to condemn sin, to expose its odiousness, to show God's hatred of it, and make known to all the subjects of his government that "every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompense of reward;" and at the same time to enable him to exercise mercy and grace to the unworthy and condemned, without endangering the peace and harmony of his vast empire.

That Christ was appointed by the Father as a substitute

for sinners, is evident from the plain statements of Scripture. *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*

Isaiah liii: 6, 5. *"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*—2 Cor. v: 21. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."*—Gal. iii: 19. *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."*—1 Peter ii: 24. It is a Scripture doctrine, that the sufferings of Christ were not on his own account; they were no judicial inflictions because of his personal transgressions; there was nothing in him that the law could condemn. He suffered as man never suffered; his agonies filled heaven and earth with amazement; but he endured his unutterable woe in his representative character. Such phrases as "the just for the unjust," "made sin for us," "made a curse for us," explain the mystery.

These sufferings in our stead were infinitely meritorious. They were not the sufferings of a mere man, or of some lofty angel, or of some inferior deity, but of that wonderful Being, in whom centred the finite and infinite, God and man. The sufferings of such a person, sustaining to heaven and earth such an official relation, threw an awful splendor over the administration of Jehovah, and rendered it perfectly safe and proper to exercise clemency to the guilty. *"We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."*—Rom. v: 10. *"We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."*—Col. i: 20. What Christ did, and what he suffered constitute his righteousness. His mediatorial work is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." By his *obedience unto death*, he obtained eternal redemption for us.

But how does this righteousness become available? The believing sinner is justified—is acquitted from the charges of the law, by having imputed to him the righteousness of Christ. To impute signifies to reckon, to place something to the account of another which he has not done, as though he had done it. Thus Paul says to Philemon concerning Onesimus: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee any

thing, put that on my account;"—impute it to me, hold me responsible for it; I will pay all charges. In this sense the word is used in reference to the righteousness of Christ as availing for the justification of the sinner.

Christ, who was perfectly innocent and holy "was made sin for us," by imputation; that we who are guilty "*might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" Imputation means nothing more than the assumption of legal liabilities, or to be made answerable for what others have done. It involves no change of personal character. Christ was not personally a sinner, though bearing the sins of the world "in his own body on the tree." "He was a Lamb without spot or blemish." He suffered the consequences of guilt, which had been contracted by others. So in the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer, there is no transfusion of righteousness into his soul by which he is made personally holy, but its infinite worthiness is so placed to his account as to affect his legal standing, that God can consistently forgive his sins, and bestow upon him eternal life. The believer's inherent holiness does not result from the judicial act of justification, but from the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

We have now seen that the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of justification. But how or upon what condition is the righteousness available? By what means shall I become justified "through our Lord Jesus Christ?"

This enquiry leads us to notice—

III. THE CONDITION OF JUSTIFICATION.

Says the text, "Being," or more correctly, "having been justified by faith." God "justifieth the ungodly that believeth in Jesus." "A man is justified by the faith of Jesus Christ." "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins." A "man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." From these passages as well as many others, it is clear that faith alone is the condition of justification.

What is faith? Faith in general, is the assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition, sustained by suitable evidence. But mere assent to well authenticated truth is not justifying faith. Devils believe many truths relating to the word and government of God; but they remain devils still. Men may entertain an intellectual conviction of the truths of divine

revelation, and may study with delight the grand system of redemption, and yet remain in the "gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity." They may admire the magnificent bow that spans the heavens, only to turn with more devotion than ever, to the "seed-time and harvests" of earth.

Justifying faith has for its object the atonement of Christ as the only ground upon which God can maintain inviolate the principles of his government, and at the same time exercise mercy to the guilty. It is a full confidence in the all-sufficiency of the atonement; that it is what God requires on the one hand, and what man needs on the other. It looks away from what man has done or can do; it fixes the eye upon Christ as able to save to the uttermost; it leads the soul to him as the only refuge from avenging justice. It is more than an intellectual conviction of the necessity and efficacy of the Redeemer's death; it is the reliance of the whole soul upon his infinite merits for pardon and eternal life. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." His affections accept, embrace, and trust in Jesus. He renounces his own righteousness, abhors himself in dust and ashes, acknowledges his infinite unworthiness, and lays hold upon Christ as his surety, as his "all in all." He sees Christ in all his fulness of grace, "the fairest among ten thousands, and altogether lovely." Instead of "going about to establish his own righteousness," he clings to that which is "through the faith of Christ." He approves and loves God's plan of saving sinners. He honors God. He adores his grace. He magnifies his justice. He wonders, and rejoices. 'The renunciation of self and hearty reception of Christ in all his offices, are involved in the idea of saving faith. No mere theoretical belief in the truths of God's revelation; no mere belief in the facts connected with the personal history of Christ, his incarnation, sufferings, and death, will issue in salvation. The broken-hearted sinner, the sinner who feels and acknowledges his just condemnation; the sinner who has turned away in despair from his own doings, and who has turned to the blood and obedience of Jesus with a trusting spirit; this man, and this man only, can obtain the remission of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified. On the exercise of this faith the sinner "is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Some teach, however, that though we are not justified by the law of Moses, we are justified by the law of Christ, or gospel obedience. The principle is the same; its tendency is the same;—as fatal in the one case as in the other. Around it cluster the same great errors; and in its train may follow as many victims of delusion.

One point more requires attention—

IV. THE EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Previous to justification the sinner is an enemy of God. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.”—Rom. viii: 7. He is hostile to the government and character of God. He is often agitated and alarmed. “He is like the troubled sea that cannot rest.” He knows that “God is angry with the wicked every day.” He knows that he is “condemned already.” The thought of future retribution, embitters the joys of his existence. “There is no peace to the wicked saith my God.” But when the sinner comes to God with a broken heart and contrite spirit; when he lays his hand upon the head of his surety, and clings to him for life and salvation; when he does this, he loses his enmity, he ceases his rebellion, he is at peace with God. God and man are reconciled. God forgives and receives the guilty rebel into his favor. The penitent prodigal is welcomed to his Father’s house, and treated with princely munificence. “God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.”—2 Cor. v: 18. The justified sinner experiences peace; the storm of his bosom passes away, and there is a great calm. “A sweet tranquility visits the heart—a pure shining light, like the sunbeams that break through the opening clouds after a tempest.” It is a peace which the world can neither give, nor take away. It “passes all understanding.” It is quietness and assurance forever.

“Tongue cannot express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.”

This peace with God, from God, and in God, through Christ, sustains the soul amid all earthly calamities. In poverty, in affliction, in persecution, it remains the same. In possession of this, the Christian can even “glory in tribu-

lation." He fears no evil; for "all things work together for his good." God is his father and friend; Christ is his redeemer and brother; the Holy Ghost is his sanctifier and comforter. Is it wonderful then that his "peace flows as a river?" He is "delivered from wrath." He is no longer condemned by God's law. His sins are all forgiven. He is received into the favor of God. He is "an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ." He has "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There is "laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give in the last day." A condemned, hell-deserving sinner rescued from his doom, and "made a king and priest unto God!" O, the wonders of grace! How unsearchable are the riches of Christ! The believer has peace; he has "strong consolation;" he has "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" he has "a hope that maketh not ashamed;" he is now a son of God, and it doth not appear what he shall be, but we know that when Christ shall appear, he will be like him, for he shall see him as he is. The thunder of the archangel's trump will fall upon his ear as the music of heaven. The descending seraphim will be hailed as his escort to the city of gold and sapphire. His coronation will take place under the gaze of an assembled universe, while worlds are retreating from the presence of his Judge. Eternity will be the duration of his life, infinity his home, and God his portion. Such is the destiny, the peace, and the joy of a justified soul.

1. Let us, my brethren, magnify the grace of God. God's plan of saving men is precisely adapted to their necessities. To be justified by the law, they must have a righteousness commensurate with its claims. This they have not; they never can have. They are sinners; they are condemned already. "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."—Rom. v: 8. "Grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life." "What the law could not do," God has done by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to meet the demands of the law,—to uphold its authority and vindicate its penalties. Now "by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous." You have no personal righteousness; but Christ is made unto you righteousness. He has provided a wedding garment for you; it is "the best robe" that

heaven ever looked upon. Clothed with this you will never be speechless, but will sing with the redeemed, "Unto Him who loved us and washed us in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and our Father, unto Him be glory forever and ever."

God's plan of salvation is adapted to us in another respect. It is "without money and without price." No equivalent is required. It does not even demand any worthiness. All that is required is, that we receive it just as we are,—guilty, condemned, wretched, helpless, unworthy. O "the exceeding richness of his grace!"

"For this stupendous love of heaven
What grateful honors shall we show?
Where much transgression is forgiven,
Let love in equal ardor glow."

2. Before I take my seat, I must speak a word to those who are without God in the world. I trust you have not been uninterested hearers. The subject is of deeper personal concern to you, than to all the angels in heaven; it should be of as much importance to you as it was to Paul or to any other Christian. You know that you are transgressors of God's law; though you know not the infinite evil of your sins. You know that you need God's mercy, though you will not seek it. You know that you are unfit to stand before God, though you know not how soon you may be summoned into his presence. You know that you are in danger of eternal woe, though you make no effort to escape. You know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, though you will not come unto him that you may have life. You have a knowledge of many important truths, but no corresponding action. Why do you thus live? Why pursue a course which you cannot rationally justify? Why turn away from subjects which you know are of vital interest? Let me affectionately plead with you. Let me "pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." You are "enemies to God in your minds by wicked words." You are by nature "children of wrath, even as others." You need the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has anticipated your need. He has provided for it. He has shed his blood for the remission of your sins. He has wrought out, by his

incarnation, humiliation, obedience and suffering, such a righteousness as will suit your case. Through it God can deliver you from going down to the pit, and raise you to his right hand. Will you not accept this righteousness; will you not plead its worthiness; will you not take shelter behind it from the thunder-bolt that is ready to drop upon you? You cannot be saved by any other means. By the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified. O then, why continue another day away from Christ? Why peril your immoral soul? Why risk the loss of all that is blissful in the smile of God; of all that is good, and pure, and happy in heaven? Why increase your guilt by despising atoning blood; why tinge your eternity with a deeper gloom by rejecting the divine offers of reconciliation?

A SHORT SERMON.

“Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.”—James i: 18.

The sentiment of our text urges itself upon our minds supported by three arguments:—The general character of the Bible; the history of the church; and individual experience.

1. The Bible gives us the *only* rational and authentic account of the creation. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.”—Heb. xi: 3. It contains the *only* complete solution of the mysteries of providence. It affords the *only* infallible criterion by which to decide upon the character of moral actions. It *only*, fully and satisfactorily makes known the doctrine of a future state. And it furnishes the *only* illustrious exhibition ever given to mortals, of the natural and moral perfections of God, and even of his existence.

It has even been questioned whether ideas *could* be formed of God except from Revelation. It is perhaps too much to say that *no* mind *could* arrive at the conclusion there is a God, by a simple process of reasoning like that of Dr. Paley, or as the laws of gravitation have been inferred from the fall-

ing of an apple; but facts shew that ideas of God are wanting or erroneous, except as obtained from the Bible. When mutes acquire knowledge, they affirm they had had no conceptions of a Deity. The heathen know not God. Nor can the argument to the contrary from the Scriptures be deemed any more than a mere corroborative proof.—I mean to say the texts in Psalm xix: 1 and Romans i: 21, represent creation as *supporting* rather than *originating* these ideas. 'The latter text may be thus rendered: "For the invisible things of him, even his eternal power and godhead, from the creation of the world, *being understood*, are clearly seen by the things that are made," &c.

2. The command of God that the precepts of his word should be made known from generation to generation, is thus briefly expressed by a prophet: "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God."—Ps. lxxviii: 5-8.

In consequence of the unavoidable decline of the Hebrew language during the captivity; after the return of the Jews it became necessary not only to *read* but to *explain*. This is evident from the conduct of Ezra and his associates, as in Nehemiah viii: 1-8. And the effect was, as it is now, when we are rightly exercised, (v. 9,) "All the people wept when they heard the words of the law." This practice has the sanction of our Saviour's example.—Luke iv: 16-21.

And the *whole history* of the church down to this day, shows, that in proportion as the Scriptures have been regarded or neglected, have been her prosperity, strength and glory, or her decline, weakness and degradation. It was the capital error of the Scribes and Pharisees, that "they transgressed the commandments of God *by their traditions*."—Matt. xv: 1-5. The heresy of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection of the dead, arose from their ignorance of the Scriptures: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor

the power of God.”—Matt. xxii: 23–30. And to the same cause must be attributed all the darkness, and superstition, and moral death of popery and the middle ages. And indeed, what is the Reformation, but a return to the Bible, an appeal to the word of God?

3. The experience of the apostle Paul, although miraculous in some respects, does not in this respect deviate from Christian experience in general. “I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’” &c.—Rom. vii: 7–12.

On this subject, mistakes may exist among real Christians, mistakes which are not vital, but to be avoided. *Means* which are only *subordinate*, are considered the *principal* and *chief* instruments. One is led by afflictions, death of friends, or faithful admonition to “repent and turn unto God;” and these he considers the instruments of his conversion, to the exclusion of the word of God. But when and where have these effects been produced without a person’s knowledge of the word of God?

On this point it is not our intention to enlarge. The Scriptures afford clear and unequivocal proof. “The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.”—Rom. i: 16. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of the Lord, which liveth and endureth forever. And this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you.”—1 Peter i: 23.

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